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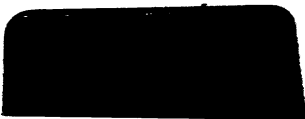
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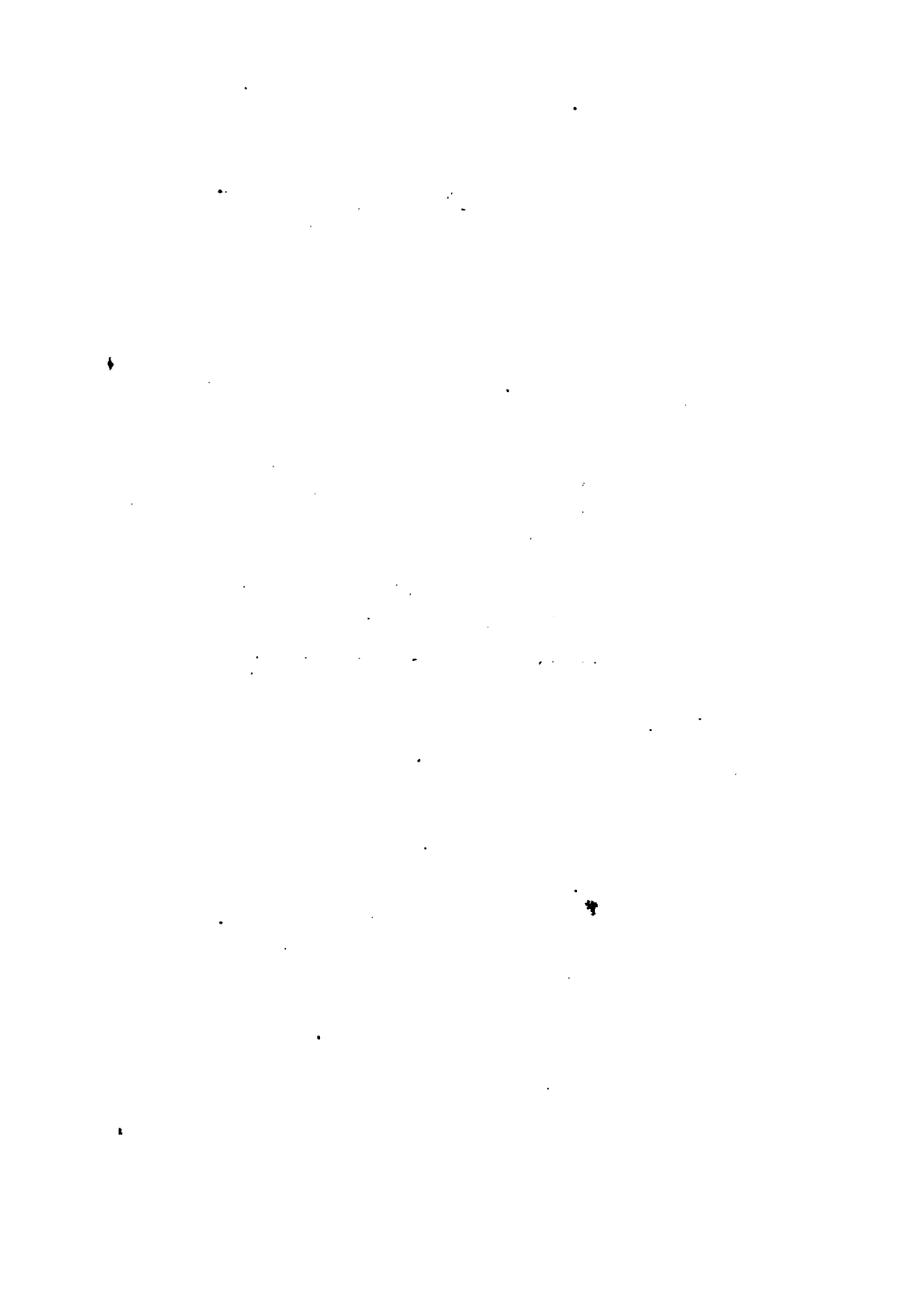




TOO MUCH ALIKE;

OR,

THE THREE CALENDARS.



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BY

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CHAPTER I.

At the battle of Waterloo, Captain Dale received a wound in his head which compelled him to retire from active service and go upon half pay. He had no fortune—being one of some six or eight younger sons. But Captain Dale was blest with a family, which consisted of three sons and three daughters. Captain Dale was a Warwickshire man, and in that county (close to Kenilworth) he rented a small farm and became a tiller of the soil. His landlord—a Mr. Shandus—was never hard upon his tenants, and he made the rent so “easy” in Captain Dale’s case, that if he made but little of his labours he never lost anything—while the excessive kindness of Mrs. Shandus towards the girls (who had no mother living) enabled the family to present a very respectable appearance in public. Still, the most rigid economy prevailed in Captain Dale’s establishment. Luxury was there unknown. The eldest girl was called Mary—the second, Charlotte—and the third, Jennette. The boys were younger.

Mary was a very pretty girl—and she was much admired: albeit her figure was not good—and she was disposed to grow up coarse. At the time this tale refers to, she had seen twenty summers.

Charlotte was not pretty—nor “good looking” even, but she had an uncommonly fine figure, and a frank manner which made her a general favourite with men. She was nineteen.

Jennette was the most beautiful of the family. Her face was an exact resemblance of the picture of the Madonna. Nor was Jennette's figure unlike that portion of the Madonna's figure which has been put upon the canvass.

Jennette was not slim, and yet she was not stout; she was not short, nor was she tall; nor was she what people call "middle sized." She was one of those persons whom nature moulds but seldom. Her face was loveliness itself—a face that never satiates the beholder—but makes him greedy to devour its smiles. Amongst a thousand pair of eyes would those of Jenny Dale attract attention. Their expression was of a sorrowful cast—and yet her lively laugh belied the thought that she could be unhappy. Had not her eyes been so bewitching, one might have praised her sweet little mouth, and her white teeth, her straight and delicately formed nose—and her neck which was white, and not too long, and her brow which had talent stamped upon it.

Jennette Dale, like her sisters, had not been educated carefully—and her mind, from lying so long fallow, had lost all the natural brilliancy of its power. She was a perfect child in all matters relating to the world, notwithstanding that the narrowness of her father's means had made her worldly in domestic affairs; nor was she informed beyond what she had picked up in the listening to her father's stories, and in occasional conversations with the members of a very limited country society.

The time arrived when it was proper that Jennette Dale should make her *début* in public. Mary and Charlotte had not been lucky in gaining profitable admirers—that is to say, men whom the old Captain would like to have for sons-in-law.

There was to be a Ball in the Leamington Assembly Rooms, and there it was that Jennette was to come out.

Three young men came into Leamington. They were about the same height, and alike in figure, face, and manner. They drest exactly alike, and their voices were alike. Two of these young men sent cards to the Master of the Ceremonies, and gave their names as "Mr. Calendar and Mr. Francis Calendar."

They walked about the ball-room arm in arm, and very soon attracted attention. There was a quiet but a quick air about the young men, and they were thought by most of the

people in the room to be graceful and good looking. "Who are those gentlemen?" was asked by dozens of people, as the young men looked on at the waltzing and followed with their eyes the feet of every couple that whirled round, and reviewed in an under tone the merits of the whole scene. But no one could tell more than that they were the "Mr. Calendars." Many people fancied they said a good thing by remarking that they must be two of the Calendars in the Arabian Nights, looking for the third, who must have gone astray. Had it not been for an accident, which befel a gentleman the day before, while he was out hunting, the "three Calendars" would have been seen together.

"Frank—may I be hanged if there's a handsome, or even a pretty, woman in the room," said Mr. Calendar to his companion. "Nor have we made the sensation I expected we should make."

"Horribly slow!" drawled Mr. Francis Calendar.

The Calendars languidly sauntered towards the door, and were going to their hotel, when on the landing they met Captain Dale and his three daughters.

"Frank!" ejaculated Mr. Calendar when the Dale party passed by, and got out of hearing. "*I am struck!* A dart has gone right through me. Did you ever see such eyes as those of the girl in white?" He alluded to Jennette.

"Beautiful—certainly!" was the answer. "Beautiful! Let us go back!"

"Come along! I'll dance with that girl, and you seize on the one in pink, and be my *vis à vis*."

The Dales entered the ball-room in the middle of the second quadrille. The Calendars, therefore, had a good opportunity of securing Mary and Jennette as partners.

Captain Dale, who had seen a good deal of life in his day, was pleased to see these young men pay attention to his daughters. He saw at a glance they were gentlemen, and in his heart he hoped they would soon relieve him from the bore of going out to balls and parties.

Jennette devoured every compliment which Mr. Calendar paid her. Mary, who had campaigned longer, was not quite so sanguine about her partner's sincerity, nevertheless she was pleased with his incessant chat, and amused with the likeness to the other, whom she fancied was his brother.

Mr. Calendar (as he called himself) admired *Jennette Dale* intensely, and the more he looked at her, the more he wished to be near her; the more he heard her speak, the more he longed to listen to her tongue; the more she smiled, the more he encouraged her to smile on. At the conclusion of the quadrille *Mr. Calendar* engaged *Mary Dale*, and *Francis Calendar* secured *Jennette*. It was also arranged that they should dance *vis à vis*. *Francis Calendar* was exactly the same sort of person in conversation as *Mr. Calendar*, and before *Jennette's* second quadrille was over she hardly knew which of the two she liked best. Both had unquestionably established that liking which would very soon ripen into love for the one who first hung out the banner. And, strange to say, *Mary Dale* felt precisely what her sister *Jennette* felt.

When the *Calendars* had finished the second quadrille, and resigned their partners, they strolled round the room together.

"I vow to thee, Jack," said *Francis Calendar*, "that she is the most heavenly being I ever beheld. There is not a woman in London, Paris, or Vienna to be compared with her."

"Which? The pink."

"No. The white. The pink is very nice; but the white has a soul, sir."

"Don't admire her, Frank!" said *Mr. Calendar*. "leave her to me. Take the pink and be satisfied. Here she comes! Look at her dear little foot. What a brute is that fellow who has her on his arm. I feel as though I should like to shoot him on the spot. I'll go and ask her to waltz. Hang me, if I don't."

"No! Don't monopolise the girl," said the other *Calendar*—who felt as fond of *Jennette*, and who admired her quite as much as his friend did. "Try the pink again, Jack."

Charlotte Dale was not taken much notice of that night, and her father in consequence sat beside her and comforted her under that most grievous misfortune that can befall a poor girl who is fond of dancing.

The old Captain was watching the two *Calendars*, and observing their admiration of *Mary* and *Jennette*, when an old officer—one *Colonel Turner*—who knew *Captain Dale* in bygone days, came up and renewed his acquaintance.

Colonel Turner was a fussy, short-sighted old gentleman, who used a large eye-glass. After other comments on the party, he remarked that there were only *two* of the Calendars present, and he wondered what had become of the third.

“Who *are* the Calendars?” inquired Captain Dale.

Colonel Turner laughed and replied, “Surely you know.”

“No one in the room knows anything about them. If *you* do, pray tell me,” said Captain Dale.

“As you are ignorant of the joke—and as it may spoil sport—I don’t think I should be justified in letting you into the secret; but I thought the matter could hardly have been unknown to most of the *gay* people here assembled.”

“Do tell *me*,” said Charlotte Dale. “I am very curious, and interested in knowing something about them.”

“In that case,” returned Colonel Turner, “I dare not refuse; but promise me it goes no further. The third Calendar will probably come in, and then we may have some very amusing scenes. One of these two men—if I were nearer I could tell you which of them, unless it be the man who is absent—is an officer in a regiment now quartered at Chatham. His name is Warren, and he has a large fortune. The other is a young doctor, and they say he will some day be a very rising man. The third man—it may be either of those, but *which* I can’t say—is a law student in the Temple. These young men have been lately to Paris and Vienna, where they have created a great sensation. In London they have passed a season together, and were the remark and wonder of many an assembly-room. They are so alike that their own relations cannot distinguish them apart. They call themselves “the Calendars;” but their real names are—Warren (the man in the army), Knolle (the doctor), and Percy (the law student).”

“Do you know them personally?” asked Charlotte.

“I do not,” replied Colonel Turner. “They seem to avoid making acquaintances. There!—if you observe, the moment a gentleman speaks to a lady, the man who was talking to her walks away. Who is that girl that they are paying so much attention to?”

“That is my youngest daughter,” said Captain Dale.

“Indeed! She is a very fine girl,” exclaimed Colonel Turner.

One of the Calendars walked up with a rather confident air to Charlotte Dale. He bowed to Colonel Turner and her father, and then said to Charlotte—"I have had the pleasure of dancing with both your sisters. May I now have the pleasure of dancing with you?"

She bowed, and he led her away.

"Now tell me," said Captain Dale, "who, of the three, is that; the soldier, the doctor, or the lawyer?"

"I'll be hanged if I can tell you," answered Colonel Turner.

"I never saw anything so strange as the likeness is," said Captain Dale. "Let us go near them and see if we can detect any difference."

The Legal Calendar and the Medical Calendar were the Calendars who went to the ball. The Military Calendar's horse had that morning buck-jumped a gate and thrown him over his head.

When the Legal and the Medical Calendar came back to the Regent, they sought the room of the Military Calendar, and detailed with extreme precision all they had seen and done.

When we pull off the coats of these gentlemen, and habit them in dressing-gowns—when we give them each a cheroot, and a glass of whisky-and-water—we may give their conversation as it flowed from them.

"You have no conception, Warren," said Mr. Knolle, "what a dear little creature she is! Is she not divine, Percy?"

"I protest against your admiring her in that way," replied Percy, earnestly. "I look upon her as mine. She is enshrined in the purest corner of my heart. Don't mention her again—or you'll make me jealous."

"What an idea," retorted Knolle. "What a soft eye is that of hers! What a darling little fawn! How I should like to see her make the tea for breakfast!"

"You had far better turn your thoughts towards the sister," repeated Percy, "for I tell you candidly I mean to ask her to marry me."

"Well, we shall be rivals," said Knolle; "for I will not resign her without a struggle."

"Are you serious?" inquired Percy.

"I am!" replied Knolle.

“Then, the best thing that both of us can do is to forget her,” rejoined Percy, and he sighed; “for nothing on earth could prevent me from —” he did not conclude the sentence.

Ten minutes elapsed in silence. At length Percy made up his mind to cheat Knolle, and he said, “Yes, I think it would be as well if we both withdrew, for I should never forget to love her—bless her! So let us all go to town and never see her again.”

Knolle considered for a minute, and in that minute he made up his mind to cheat Percy, in the same way precisely as Percy meant to cheat him,—namely, by returning as soon as possible to Leamington, and urging his suit without being interrupted by a rival and double. “Very well—with all my heart,” said Knolle.

When Knolle and Percy were ready to start, Warren made an excuse for not accompanying them. He declared he could not think of going himself till he had started his horses. The truth was this, Warren was very fond of looking at handsome faces, and he was extremely curious to see the girl of whom both his friends had become enamoured.

As soon as Percy and Knolle were off, Warren got up, and dressed himself in “the Calendar’s uniform,” and sent a message to the hotel-keeper, who came immediately. Warren wished to know if anything was going on that day in Leamington?

“Yes, sir. There is a fancy fair to-day,” was the reply.

“Where?”

“At the assembly-rooms, sir.”

“At what hour?”

“It will begin at twelve o’clock, sir.”

CHAPTER II.

At half-past twelve Warren wended his way to the fancy fair. There was a goodly number of persons there already, but carriages, full of people, were still coming up. Several gentlemen who had seen and spoken to Percy and Knolle on the previous night bowed to Warren, who received their salutations as a matter of course.

"Where can these girls be?" said Warren to himself, after glancing round the room and seeing nothing to admire. There were many—very many—nice looking girls, but there was not one present, whom he, or any one else, could in candour declare to be beautiful. Suddenly he caught sight of a lady at a stall, and not only did she bow to him, but she smiled most blandly. Warren walked up to her, and trusted she had not taken cold on the way home from the ball. Mary Dale, who was standing at a little distance from Jennette—on hearing a voice which she thought she recognised—turned round as soon as she could, and bestowed on Warren a smile and a bow. This he returned in a way that would have induced a bystander to say that Warren had seen Mary Dale very often, and was on very good terms with her.

"And what thought you of the ball?" said Warren to Jennette.

"I liked it very much," she replied.

"It was the happiest evening I ever spent in my life," said Warren. "I never enjoyed myself more."

"You did not dance much," she rejoined.

"No," said he, "but I danced with the only beautiful woman in the room."

"Are you going to the concert this evening?" asked Jennette.

"It depends," said Warren. "Are you?"

"Yes," Mrs. Shauder, who was always a Lady Patroness of that kind of thing, had said then indeed.

"Then I shall certainly go," said Warren.

"And will your friend go?" she asked.

“No! he has gone to town,” was the reply.

Colonel Turner here came up and chatted with Jennette, and Warren moved himself into the vicinity of Mary. Had he not seen Jennette, he would have admired her more than he did—for she looked superbly handsome at that fancy fair.

In the evening Warren met them at the concert and contrived to sit next Jennette. Captain Dale watched him narrowly, and he did not know whether to be pleased or not. He could see that the girl liked “the Calendar,” and he feared he might win her affections without getting back his in return; for Captain Dale was too much of a man of the world to be ignorant of the fact, that men often look unutterable things, without meaning anything whatsoever, beyond a desire to gratify vanity.

Warren looked at Jennette. And he *loved* her. Her artless and unaffected manner, added to her beauty, made him feel towards her what he had never felt for any other woman. He learnt from her all their intended movements, and he determined to follow in their train and propose to her without losing time: for he feared, if he did not some other would soon make offers unto her, which she might accept. He speedily found out where Captain Dale resided, and he rode over, and sent in a card on which was written

“Mr. Warren,
—th Rgt.”

The girls, who were all at that moment employed in mending their father’s woollen socks, ran up stairs as fast as they could. The old man was out in the fields. It was a race among the girls, to get ready first; they were all so anxious that Mr. Warren should not be kept waiting. Jenny was contented with a change of shoes, a little pink tie, a neat parting of the hair, and a smoothing of it down.

Warren was walking about the room, expecting every moment to behold the face of the girl who had captivated him, when the door opened and Jennette stood before him. Mary and Charlotte soon made their appearance.

Captain Dale came in, and was a little surprised to find the Calendar with his daughters. He was silent and reserved at first; but after a while he became talkative, and invited Warren to stay luncheon. He accepted the invite; and Captain Dale, in order to give his daughters an opportunity

of decanting wine, getting out the store almonds and raisins, and so forth, asked Warren if he were fond of dogs—as he could show him a very pretty litter of terriers. Warren, of course, liked dogs.

“But let me order your horse to be put in the stable,” said Captain Dale.

The Terriers were seen and approved of; and then Captain Dale showed Warren some camelias which he had reared. Warren, of course, “liked camelias exceedingly.”

An hour was passed in admiring other objects, animate and inanimate—a cow, a new fashioned water-cart of Captain Dale’s own invention, a machine for converting oat hay into chaff, &c. &c. &c. When they returned they found luncheon ready.

The ball, at which Warren was not, was the favourite topic: and the description given of it by Percy and Knolle enabled Warren to discuss it in general terms, and join in the conversation. Then they talked of the fancy fair, then the concert.

“Have you ever been in this part of the country before?” asked Captain Dale.

“Never in my life,” said Warren.

“Have you seen the ruins in our neighbourhood?”

“No, I have not.”

“Would you like to see them?”

“I should be enchanted.”

“Well, name a day and I shall be very glad to show you over them.”

“To-morrow? or the next day?”

“Yes, to-morrow.”

“You have been on the Continent lately, Mr. Warren?” said Mary.

“I have,” he replied.

“Oh, we’ve heard all about your adventures,” said Captain Dale.

Warren laughed, and admitted that those adventures had been extremely amusing.

“I declare *I* could not distinguish you from the other gentleman,” said Charlotte.

“I think *I* could,” said Jennette.

“Well; tell me,” said Warren, good humouredly, looking her full in the face.

She hung down her head and was silent.

"Come, Jenny," said her father, "you provoked the challenge, and you must speak."

After much coaxing she turned her eyes away from him and observed—

"You were the gentleman who danced with me first, and with my sister Mary afterwards."

Warren looked at her tenderly, and declared that he was not at the ball; and only spoke of it from the description given by his friends who were present. "I was thrown from my horse on the day which preceded the night of the ball and I was unable, in consequence, to attend: *I give you my honour* I was not there," said he.

Warren stayed at the house of Captain Dale till it was nearly dark, and then galloped back to Leamington.

The long night passed away; and, next morning, a little after eleven, Warren was by the side of Jennette. Whether it was by arrangement or by accident, it was impossible to say; but Jenny was the only one who was in the drawing-room to receive him; and this Warren considered a very good sign. Her father, she told him, had gone down to the meadow, but would be back presently; and her sisters, she said, were taking a lesson in drawing; but she would tell them he had arrived. Warren begged her not to disturb them. Jennette showed him some of his sisters' performances in water-colours, which he declared to be beautiful, though he scarcely looked at them, for his eyes were riveted upon herself, and to take them off her was a matter of difficulty and pain. Her hand, her ear, her dark hair, her neck, had all their share of admiration; but the eyes claimed more than any other feature.

It was time to go to the ruins, and a pony chaise was brought to the door. Captain Dale said, if Warren would drive, he would walk; but this Warren would not hear of, (much as he would have liked driving the chaise,) so he mounted his horse and rode beside them.

The ruins were reached, and the party alighted from the pony chaise.

"My daughters will tell you all the legends," said Captain Dale. "I have heard them so often I am tired of

them. If you will excuse me, I will remain here and read the newspaper." He took an old *Times* out of his pocket, and sat down upon a large stone.

Mary and Charlotte, who had rambled away from Warren and Jenny for some time, now approached them. Mary remarked that it was time they were going, and that Papa must have spelt the paper from beginning to end.

The Dales' house was not more than two miles distant from the ruins, and the girls proposed that they should walk home.

The walk home was not so agreeable to Warren as it might have been. True it was he had Jennette on one arm, but Charlotte had taken the other; and he could not talk in the same strain that he had indulged in amongst the ruins, nor would politeness admit of his gazing on one sister to the neglect of the other.

Warren was invited to dine with the family.

The ladies had retired to the little drawing-room, and Captain Dale and Warren began to discuss a bottle of old port. Very little wine affected the old Captain, and after the third glass his eye began to twinkle cheerily. He then commenced a series of stories about the Peninsula, and convents, and forlorn hopes. And beyond the phrases "No?" "You don't say so?" "Dear me!" "Who would have thought it?" Warren took no part in the conversation, but suffered the old Captain to run on *ad libitum*. The old Captain filled a fourth glass, and as soon as half of it was swallowed he grew quite affectionate, and declared to Warren that he had taken a great fancy to him.

"I am very proud to hear it, sir," said Warren; "for I am exceedingly anxious to attain your good graces."

"Not mine, I suspect," said Captain Dale, with a laugh.

Warren also laughed.

"Listen to this," said Captain Dale. "I began life with a commission in a tramping regiment, a rig out, and an elder brother's blessing. I married at twenty-two; I have never owed a shilling that I could not pay when asked to do so; I have reared a large family, and have always looked as well off as any of my neighbours."

"What a happy reflection that must be!" exclaimed

Warren. "Just as a man is about to close his eyes and compose himself to sleep, to be able to say such a thing must be a great luxury!"

"It is a luxury," said Captain Dale, "and I am glad to hear you say so. Most young men in our service laugh at such things, you know."

"I know they do," conceded Warren; "and very wrong it is of them—very wrong!"

"I am glad to hear that is your opinion," said Captain Dale; "but do you know I believe you are not the steadiest of fellows yourself."

"I will not tell you an untruth," replied Warren. "I *have been* a very extravagant person, and what the world would probably call 'wild,' but I assure you I have never exceeded my means. I have the credit of being rich; but that is untrue. I get about £1,300 a-year out of an estate in Cornwall, and up to that I have always lived since I became of age. I may have exceeded it once or twice, but in so trifling a manner that a very little self-denial always put me square in a few months. And now that I have told you so much, you will, I trust, let me tell you something further."

"By all means," said the old Captain.

"If," continued Warren, "you will consent to my paying my addresses to your youngest daughter—I will—in the event of her accepting my proposal—settle upon her my estate, and all else that I possess in the world."

Captain Dale held out his hand, which Warren shook affectionately. The old man could not speak, but a tear of joy stole down his cheeks that his little Jenny, as he called her, would be well provided for.

"Take some more wine," said the old man.

Warren declined, and said something about going, as it was getting late. Captain Dale said he would give him a shake-down. This arrangement pleased Warren vastly, and he gave his host many warm thanks.

Captain Dale poured out the last glass, drained it, and soon fell asleep in his easy chair. Warren then found his way into the little drawing-room.

It was getting late, and Warren could see the girls were in a difficulty; all three looked so inquiringly at each other. They were ignorant that their father had asked Warren to

remain all night, and no one of them would venture to do so; for Captain Dale was a very curious old man, and extremely particular on many points.

Mary Dale had a great mind to put her three little brothers into one bed, and offer the second bed to Warren: but the boy's room was so very thinly furnished, (poor girl) her pride stepped in, and got the better of her hospitality.

"You will be starved to death!" cried Jenny, tenderly, and she shuddered when Warren rose to take his departure. It was certainly a bitter cold night.

"I hope not," said Warren, "but if you don't lend me your cloak I may be."

She ran for it, and, what was more, she brought him a little tippet made of white rabbit skin, and begged him to tie it about his neck.

Thus slightly sheltered from the cold, Warren bade them "good bye," and, mounting his horse, he jogged on quietly towards Leamington.

Early the next morning Warren was galloping to Kenilworth. When he neared the cottage, he saw Jennette walking alone in the little garden which fronted the abode. He returned her cloak and tippet to her, and made a variety of pretty, but honest speeches. It was then past seven o'clock.

Beauty is never seen to such advantage as on a cold morning after a long walk. The cheeks are all bloom, the eyes brighter, and even if the cold have made the lips purple, the glow they seem to feel makes them very delightful to look at. Jennette's sisters were still asleep, and had not Jennette been quite certain—had she not had a presentiment Warren would be there early—she would not have been strolling in the garden, on that day, until after breakfast.

* * * * *

Warren told Jennette that he loved her.

She trembled involuntarily; but she made no reply.

He told her that her father was willing to have him for a son-in-law. The girl was so happy that she shed tears. She looked into Warren's eyes, and sighed assent. They walked into the house, and into the room where the breakfast was laid.

One of Jenny's younger brothers ran in with the follow-

ing words upon his tongue:—"Jenny, Tom's been waiting for the last hour for you to give the corn out for the horses;" but, to the boy's astonishment, he saw Warren kissing sister Jenny's hand; and the consequence was, that nothing further than "Jenny, Tom's been waiting," escaped his lips. The little boy was very indignant, and he ran to the door of his elder sister's room, and called out "Mary! That gentleman that was here yesterday is kissing Jenny's hand, and she's letting him!"

Captain Dale heard the exclamation; and, recollecting what had passed on the preceding night, he could not help laughing.

"Nonsense, Robert," said Mary. "You are telling stories."

"I am not, Mary; I *saw* it," cried the boy.

Charlotte, who was in the same room as her sister Mary, sat down upon a trunk, and laughed convulsively.

"What's the matter, Bob?" called out Captain Dale. "Come here, sir!"

The boy went, and told his father what he had seen.

The cottage was not a very large one, and Warren, as well as Jennette, overheard all that passed.

Jennette's cheeks became crimson, and in her confusion the keys fell upon the floor. Had Robert then been in the room, he would have further stories to tell; for Warren, when he placed the keys in Jenny's hand again, repeated the kiss even more fervently.

Warren and Jennette Dale were *soon* engaged to be married, and a day—three months distant—was named for the ceremony. Persons in this happy stage are much better left to themselves; and, therefore, we shall enter upon another scene at the Regent Hotel.

Jack Percy came down by the mail coach. He engaged rooms, and then made various inquiries about many of the people in the neighbourhood. On walking into the public room, he saw a letter on a side table addressed to George Warren, Esq., care of *Henry* Calendar, Esq., Regent Hotel, Leamington. The seal had never been broken. It was evidently "waiting" to be opened by the gentleman to whose care it was addressed. Percy stared at the letter, and began to speculate.

“When did Mr. Calendar leave the hotel?” he inquired of the waiter.

“He has not left us yet, sir,” was the reply. “He has his rooms still; but he has gone for a few days to Kenilworth.”

“Indeed!” said Percy. “And when do you expect him to return?”

“Perhaps, to-night, sir.”

“Do you know with whom he is staying?”

“No, sir; but I think with Captain Dale, as the Captain and himself were here together a few days ago.”

Percy felt suddenly uncomfortable, and somewhat sick at heart. In truth, he could fancy Warren exchanging sweet glances with Jennette, and the thought made him jealous. He had no claim to the girl's affections; but he *fancied* he had; and this fancy induced him to think her faithless and fickle. So strange, too, is the effect of love upon one's better reason, Jack Percy considered that Warren had played him an unfair trick—had taken advantage of his absence. Percy forgot, of course, that Knolle might with more justice lay such conduct to his (Percy's) charge.

The moment a man thinks himself supplanted in a woman's affections, he immediately begins to depreciate, to himself, the very charms which inspired his love and regard; and so was it with Percy. He said to himself, “I only saw her by candle-light, and I suspect, by day, she would not look so well. The other sisters are too stout, and the chances are, this girl will grow like them. She was not worth the trouble. I wonder how I could have been such a fool! Besides, she's an ignorant girl, and she has no money to make up for a single defect. I am glad of this as it has turned out; for, after all, to saddle myself with a wife before I am four-and-twenty, would not be very prudent.”

But, notwithstanding this philosophical turn of mind, it was quite clear that Jack Percy was extremely annoyed; and the sighs which escaped him told, unmistakably, that if Jennette would look upon him lovingly, he would soon come round again to his former high opinion of her beauty, grace, and elegance.

What was to be done? Satisfy himself whether Warren *had* established himself in Jennette's favour? Or go back at

once? Hope led him to think it was just possible that Warren might admire Mary.

Percy had armed himself strongly. A relation of Mrs. Shandus was a great friend of Percy's, and he wrote to the lady to say that Percy would soon pay their part of the country a visit, and if he should call, he hoped they would show him every attention.

Percy did call on the Shandus family, and the Shandus family did pay him every attention. They begged him to stay a few days with them, and the invitation was most gladly accepted.

One morning Mary Dale and her sister Charlotte called on Mrs. Shandus. Mr. Percy was introduced, and instantly recognised by both girls as one of the Calendars whom they had seen at the ball.

"What has become of Jennette?" asked Mrs. Shandus of Mary.

"She has a head-ache to-day," said Mary.

"Are you sure it is a *head-ache*?" Mrs. Shandus inquired.

Mary smiled, and said "Yes."

Percy pretended to talk to another lady who was present; but he was listening to all that passed. His friendship for Warren was turned into a fierce hate; and Jennette regarded as gone for ever.

When Mary and Charlotte took their departure, Mrs. Shandus asked Percy if he did not think Mary Dale a very handsome girl! He replied that he thought her very good looking.

"Most people admire the youngest sister most, the one who has a head-ache, and she is certainly a sweetly pretty creature," said Mrs. Shandus.

"Indeed," said Percy, and he suppressed a sigh.

"I believe she is engaged to marry a Mr. Warren, a young officer who fell in love with her at first sight."

"How very odd!" exclaimed Percy. "He is one of my greatest friends. I cannot fancy Warren a married man. He is such a very uncertain, unsteady person."

"I am sorry to hear that," said Mrs. Shandus.

"Marriage will probably make him a different being," remarked Percy.

"It may," rejoined the lady; "but I always fancy a girl runs a very great risk."

"True, very true!" conceded Percy, "Have you seen my friend?"

"No. He was to have dined here the day before yesterday; but he was obliged to go away in great haste—to join his regiment, I believe."

Percy then gave Mrs. Shandus an account of "the Calendar tour," and of the part he took. He told her also that he had seen the Misses Dale at the ball.

Mrs. Shandus had heard from Captain Dale of what took place that night. While she laughed she *suspected* that Jenny Dale was the cause of Mr. Percy's visit to that part of the world. She was resolved, however, to make sure that very evening.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTAIN DALE had read a paragraph in the *Times* which stated the —th Regiment had been ordered to proceed to the East Indies. This horrified Warren, and he wrote to one Captain Dunkington to know if it were true or not. In reply he received the following letter:—

"George, my boy. We are off to a dead certainty. Ever since we heard it the band has played nothing but '*The gals we leave behind us.*' It may be a consolation for you to hear that so many fellows want to exchange it is expected that *all* applications will be refused. I sincerely hope they may be: for it will suit my book to go just now, and I don't want to see new faces around me. The Colonel, I am happy to say, is in the same humour. So prepare, my dear boy, for a trip to Bengal. I hear they lead a very jolly life out there; but then they say that the Miskeetees bites bad, and that it is often so precious hot that it melts the wax candles.—Yours everlastingly, TOM DUNKINGTON."

It was this letter which took Warren to London. Sure enough, as Dunkington said, so many applied for an exchange that they had to choose between "going out, or retiring." And Warren had to decide whether he would leave the army as a Subaltern and marry at once? or proceed to India, and defer matrimony for a few years? To take a wife with him to a country of whose climate he had heard such dreadful accounts, was out of the question. His brother officers whom he consulted, laughed at him for being such a fool. They promised him fifty girls to choose from quite as handsome as Jenny Dale; and they drew a very strong picture of the absurdity of a young man quitting a service before he had gained any rank in it.

"Here you are, sir, in good company?" said Captain Dunkington, reading an order which directed that himself and Lieut. George Warren should embark on the 1st proximo, on the ship "*Fairlie*," with a detachment of 190 men.

"It is impossible that I can go," said Warren. "Why this is the twenty what? the twenty-fourth. Seven days. The thing's absurd! It can't be done!"

Warren had written a long letter to Captain Dale, in which he laid before him his whole case. He declared himself ready to be governed by his advice, or his command. Old Captain Dale, who was as honest a man as ever breathed, replied in these words:—

"My dear Mr. Warren,—I have considered everything, and turned over in my mind all the *pros and cons*. My daughter is, of course, my first thought and care, and the sooner that I saw her happily married the more happy I should be myself. But I cannot help feeling that I should be doing you a great wrong if I recommended you to retire from the army. I agree with what your friends say upon that point. Jenny of her own free will is yours whenever you claim her. I do not clearly understand whether you propose marrying her at once, and taking her with you. Let me say, that I would use all the influence I possess with my daughter to dissuade her from proceeding to India. You have asked my advice, and I give it you. Proceed with your regiment, and in India effect an exchange into the first regiment that is coming home.—Yours, very truly, WILLIAM DALE."

Warren was disappointed. He had hoped the old man would say "sell."

Mrs. Shandus formed a riding party in the evening, and led it round by the Dale's cottage, and met the three girls and their father in one of the lanes. Jenny was prepared to see Jack Percy, or Knolle (the other Calendar), for Charlotte and Mary said they had met him that morning. Mrs. Shandus watched Jack Percy's eyes, and from their expression her every suspicion was confirmed. There was no harm, she fancied, in giving him an opportunity of talking to Jennette again, and she invited the whole family to dine on the day following.

At this party Percy paid Jennette very little attention: not so much, indeed, as he paid to the other sisters. Her silent demeanour, and absent look, made him feel that George Warren had succeeded in gaining her love. He did not conceal from Jennette that he was the person who danced with her first at the ball: on the contrary, he took an opportunity of making her acquainted with that fact.

Jennette could not, even then, easily distinguish Percy from Warren. The next day Percy went to town, resolved to forget Jennette.

Knolle was unable to go to Leamington, to prosecute his suit with the girl who had so captivated him; but he wrote a letter to her father and herself.

Had Jennette not been engaged to Warren, the proposals made by Knolle would have been accepted; for his epistle was that of a very superior man, and one endowed with an open and kind heart.

From Percy, Knolle heard of Warren's success. These two men, who were both greatly disappointed, continued to be very good friends; and whenever they met, which was often, they invariably talked about "the little Dale" without the least angry feeling being created on either side.

* * * * *

Warren went down to say farewell to the family of which he was engaged to become a member. It was a parting far too painful to dwell upon, and therefore let it be hurried over.

The *Fairlie* sailed, and Jenny's anxiety began. There

was first the danger of a sea voyage, then the dangers of a bad climate to reflect upon; and these were magnified and multiplied till she almost placed Warren's return beyond the pale of possibility. She pined and grew thin; and her father began to regret he had not given Warren different advice.

Jenny's greatest pleasure was in writing letters to George. What she could find to fill up so many sheets of paper, it is impossible to say.

Warren passed a very miserable time on the passage out to India. His mind was, at first, easy; but gradually he was beset with jealous fears that she might be wooed and won by some one else, if his absence were protracted. He promised her, during his last interview, that he would write a letter to her every day; and from the day he left the land until he arrived at Calcutta he kept his word, and despatched the whole packet by the first opportunity.

About two months after Warren left England, Jack Percy resolved to make another effort to win Jenny Dale; but the girl was firm, and it seemed as though nothing could shake her affection or make her break her engagement with Warren. That she liked Percy extremely there could be no question—and that she would have cared for him, and loved him, had not Warren been beforehand, was equally certain. All the aid that a man could have was afforded Percy. Both Mr. and Mrs. Shandus spoke of him as every thing that was agreeable, good natured, noble-minded, intelligent, and amiable: and the opinions of this worthy couple were generally regarded by the Dale family as criterions for the formation of judgment on all matters. Percy's prospects, too, which were, certainly, bright, were dwelt upon at large. Jennette's sisters also were in Percy's favour; for he had more control over his feelings than Warren, and was not quite so exclusive in his conversation and attentions.

Just about this time a very high compliment was paid to Knolle. He was especially requested, by one of the first physicians of the day, to give an opinion on the case of a patient who was no less a personage than one of the Royal Family; and although his opinion differed with the opinions of much older and more experienced men, it was acted upon; and the result having been most successful, he was talked about, and his name figured in all the newspapers.

Priding himself on this fame, Knolle was instigated to make another offer to Jennette Dale, whom he had tried to forget, but in vain. Like Percy, he fancied that Warren was an interloper, and had no right to her. He was chagrined to find, however, that fame with Jennette was of less consequence than honour.

The packet of letters which were forwarded by Warren never reached the hands of Jenny Dale. How they miscarried was never ascertained. A fever which seized George a few days after his arrival in India, prevented him writing by the next opportunity.

Captain Dale, as well as his daughter, became uneasy. The old man feared many things; but Jenny only one—namely, that death had removed “dear George” from the world.

An opportunity offered for Warren to exchange, and he closed instantler. The vessel in which he took his passage sprung a leak before she neared the Cape of Good Hope, and into that port they had to run her, in the month of July. Here the vessel was detained for five weeks; and although Warren wrote very many letters to Jenny, he was unable to forward a single one of them.

Jenny Dale went to spend a day with Mrs. Shandus, and she was sitting alone with that lady in the drawing-room. After discussing several matters of trifling interest, over their worsted work, Mrs. Shandus, without raising her eyes from the frame, asked Jenny if she had of late heard from her lover, Mr. Warren?

“No!” she replied, with a sigh.

“Is not that very odd?” inquired Mrs. Shandus.

“Something may have happened.”

“What does your father think?”

“I don’t know—my father has become so cross tempered of late, we are all afraid to say anything to him,”

“I do not wish to disparage your lover, my dear,” resumed Mrs. Shandus, after a short silence, “but it occurs to me, that he could never have cared for you, as he wished you to believe.”

“I assure you he did,” replied Jenny.

“As much as you cared for him?”

“Yes, quite as much.”

“Have you forgotten to write to him?”

“No—and I am not sure that he has forgotten to write to me.”

“How can you be so credulous, Jennette? Your father has seen his name in the *Gazette*, so you are certain he is living. And vessels have arrived from India almost every week. I do not wish to give you any pain. I only talk to you for your own sake. But is it not probable, dear, that Mr. Warren is an out-of-sight-out-of-mind person, and that he has thought proper to love some one else?”

“I can hardly believe that. I wish you had seen George,” said Jenny.

“I can easily fancy what he would be. They tell me he is very like Mr. Percy in person, but more wild, and less amiable.”

Jennette was about to reply, but the quiet way in which Mrs. Shandus spoke, imparted a strong fear that she was correct in supposing George Warren was fickle—and the thought was so painful it robbed her of all power of speech.

Meanwhile Mrs. Shandus continued:—“I think, my dear, you were wrong in refusing Mr. Percy’s offer. That he loved you—that he would have made you a good and kind husband—and that he would have conveyed all his feelings to you from the remotest corner of the earth, I have no doubt whatsoever.”

“The other day,” resumed Mrs. Shandus, “I wrote to Mr. Percy, and asked him to execute a little commission for me in London. In reply I received a letter which I will show you.” Mrs. Shandus rose from her chair and searched the drawer of her writing desk.

“I had rather not see it,” exclaimed Jenny, “if it speaks of George Warren or myself.”

“Mr. Warren’s name is not mentioned,” said Mrs. Shandus, returning with the letter. “I will read it to you.” She read:—

“MY DEAR MRS. SHANDUS.—I was happy that I could be of use to you. The trouble was not immense. Best thanks for your consoling paragraphs,—and your attempt to lessen my disappointment. Time, they say, destroys everything. I hope it will have a powerful effect on my love for her. I trust I shall never meet her again—and that seeing may no

more aggravate those feelings which distance will not dispel. I have written to Mr. Shandus to ask his advice as to whether I should accept an office which is offered to me in a very distant part of the world. I think it would be sacrificing the future—but I incline to wish he may answer 'yes.' There I may utterly despair, and with despair, may come a liking for some other which may grow into an attachment. Here I have no happiness—and no rest. You have borne to listen to my woes too long already. You must be tired of the theme. Yours sincerely, J. Percy."

"And is Mr. Percy going?" asked Jenny.

"He is. Mr. Shandus has advised him not to refuse so good an offer, and you will repent hereafter that you were not his wife. Now suppose Mr. Warren has, in the East Indies, contracted dissipated habits, and suppose he should return a very different person altogether—and you did not think proper to keep your engagement?"

Mrs. Shandus went on in this strain so long that Jennette was reasoned into the belief that Warren had forgotten her—and that it was her bounden duty to love Jack Percy, and marry him.

A matter of business—important business—called Mr. Shandus to London, and there he was detained for some weeks. Mrs. Shandus was requested by her husband to join him, and she did so; taking Jenny Dale, who had never been in the capital, along with her. It was the end of April, and "gaiety" had just commenced.

Percy, of course, called upon Mrs. Shandus and escorted herself and Jennette to see the sights that were then to be seen. He also dined frequently at Mr. Shandus's house, and went to evening parties with them. By these means he had many opportunities afforded him to ingratiate himself. The truth was he made himself a great favourite with Mrs. Shandus, and she was determined, if it were possible, that he should wed the girl he sighed for. Jennette began to think he was the most agreeable person in the world, and that it was cruel not to return his affection.

One day Percy took Mrs. Shandus and Jenny Dale to the Water Colour Exhibition in Pall Mall. Mrs. Shandus met with some ladies whom she knew, and she purposely joined their party, and left Percy to show Jennette round the room.

While Mrs. Shandus was on his arm, Jack Percy chatted incessantly to both of them, and kept them—by his ready and witty observations—constantly smiling and sometimes laughing aloud. But now that Jenny alone was with him, he was as silent as he could well be.

A gentleman, whom Percy never saw before, came up and shook him by the hand.

Percy was so used in public to be mistaken for his friends Warren and Knolle, that he always returned the shake, and passed on with—"How do you do?" But the stranger who now accosted, followed him, and remarked it was the best thing in the exhibition.

"What is?" inquired Percy.

"Why, '*The three Calendars*,'" he answered.

"You don't mean to say they have got us here?" said Percy.

"You'll find it—in the corner room."

"Then we'll look at it presently," said Percy, and walked off in a different direction, gazing on Jenny's heavenly face.

When they had got away from the stranger, Percy led Jenny Dale into the room in which the picture of "*The three Calendars*" was said to be. Numbers of persons were standing round and admiring it; and when Percy appeared, and looked on, the scene was indeed ridiculous. There was a ticket in the corner of the frame which told Percy it was "sold," and he was sorry for this, for he longed to possess the picture.

CHAPTER IV.

Two months passed away, and Percy led Jenny Dale to the altar. She looked divine in her bridal dress; but the expression of her face was far from happy. She did not weep; but those who watched her closely might observe that her soul was not spontaneously joining in the ceremony. Captain Dale had acted according to the advice of Mrs. Shandus, and evidently not from the dictates of his own

heart. He smiled and looked gay; but, somehow or other, the old man seemed ashamed of himself. Mrs. Shandus was all happiness; for she had resolved that Jenny should be Jack Percy's wife, and she had seen that resolve fulfilled. And Mary Dale and Charlotte seemed very well pleased. They had calculated on the greater chances of getting husbands, now that Jenny would have a house in London, whereto she would occasionally invite them to stay with her.

Percy was too delighted to look around him. Jenny was *his*, and that was enough. But had Percy been an unbiassed spectator of the whole scene, no one would have detected more readily that the marriage was forced,—that is to say, something of harmony was wanting, although it were difficult, perhaps, to say where.

As they were turning from the lane into the high road, Jenny put her head out of the carriage window, to take one more look at the cottage where she had lived ever since she was a little child. She could see her father still standing in the verandah, watching the carriage which bore her away. An instinctive shudder came over her, and curdled her blood. She knew not why; but had it been possible for her to have untied the knot, she would have then done so, and ran back once more to her father's roof. Percy had seen a good deal of the world, and he was a great admirer of human nature; but he knew not the thoughts which at that moment darted through Jennette's brain, and attributing the tears which stood in her eyes to the mere parting from her childhood's home, he was rather pleased than otherwise to behold them. They betrayed, he fancied, a good feeling and a tender heart.

The impressions which are made in the earlier stages of affection are always the strongest, and Jenny Dale was wondering if she should ever see George Warren again. As she listened to the kind words which Percy spoke to her, she hoped, through a sigh, that Warren and herself never more would meet.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER accident befel the ship in which Warren had taken his passage. She had gone into St. Helena for water, and an American whaler let go his anchor so close, that in swinging round, during the night, there was a collision which so damaged the bows and the bowsprit of the vessel, she was detained for nearly a month. From St. Helena Warren wrote to Jenny, and his letters were received at the cottage; but as she was then Mrs. Percy, and as the initials (G. W.) in the corner of each letter told by whom they were written, Captain Dale did not forward them—but put them by, in order that they might be returned to the writer.

Some ships have a continued bad run of luck, and the *Lord Rodney* was one of them. Off the Western Islands she encountered a gale of wind, and in running before it she “broached to,” and in coming round shipped the body of a sea amid-ships, which gutted the cuddy and swept her decks. In that awful crash—which often maketh seamen pale with fear, and the knees of landsmen to knock one against the other—five souls perished, and had not Warren been between decks at the moment, he also would have been swept overboard; for not a vestige of his cabin remained.

He feared the vessel was lost, and in that moment breathed a blessing on the head of Jenny Dale. Strange to say it was in that very hour that she became the wife of Percy. For five days the *Lord Rodney* was hove to, and in danger the whole time, for the wind was shifting every two hours.

In a crippled state, the *Lord Rodney* made the land, and, at Weymouth, Warren was put on shore by a pilot boat. He immediately took the coach and travelled to town. Without waiting to report himself at the Horse Guards, he hired a post-chaise and was rapidly conveyed to Kenilworth, and then to Captain Dale’s cottage. It was about one o’clock in the morning when he arrived. With a beating heart he leapt out, and knocked at the door. Fervently did he hope that “*dear* little Jenny” would guess it was he—for he had written from Weymouth, in the hope his letter would precede him—and be there to open it.

"What can this be?" said Charlotte, who was the first to be awakened.

Mary wondered also, and called the servant who was sleeping in the hall.

Warren was talking to one of the terriers, which stood aloof and barked lustily at him; and Mary and Charlotte from the window, which they quickly opened, were listening to his voice.

"Come here, Ruby?" Warren called out to the dog. "Don't you know me? Come here and shake hands!"

"I declare," said Mary, "it is Mr. Warren!"

Charlotte made bold to inquire, "Who is *that*?"

Warren fancied it was Jenny's voice, and he answered,—
"A friend of thine!"

"Mr. Warren?" asked Mary.

"All that remains of him. Pray tell them to open the door," he replied.

The girls bade the man servant obey his commands, and hurried on their dresses.

Captain Dale, who was not easily awakened, slept through all the noise; and the girls thought it were better that he should not be disturbed.

When Mary Dale came into the room, which Warren was pacing impatiently, he bounded forth to meet her; and when he seized her hand—the hand of one whom he had so long regarded as a sister, and the sister of one whom he loved and looked upon as his wife—he could not help greeting her with a kiss: and when Charlotte, too, came down—Charlotte who used to tease him and laugh at him—he greeted her in the same manner.

Ere a minute had elapsed Warren said: "And where is Jenny?"

The poor girls knew not what to say, and therefore they remained silent. He repeated the question and looked in their faces, inquiringly—for their faces were very sorrowful.

"Tell me," said Warren, alarmed by their looks; "where is dear Jenny?"

They could not tell him.

"For heaven's sake!" he exclaimed, growing warm with anxiety, and throwing off his cloak, "Do tell me; where is dear Jenny?"

"Tell him, Mary," said Charlotte.

"Cannot *you* tell me?" he asked—fearing Jenny was dead.

They remained silent.

"I implore you, I beseech you," he said, "tell me—do not torture me thus. Is dear Jenny living?"

"Yes," said Charlotte.

"And is she well?"

"You must know, Mr. Warren," said Mary, "that we never heard from you, or of you ——."

"I wrote volumes," he interrupted. "Where is Jenny?"

"If you will let me tell you," essayed Mary, "you shall know."

"But tell me, at once," he demanded. "Surely she is not the wife of another?"

"She is," answered Charlotte.

Warren placed his hand upon his forehead, and imagined the conversation he then held was in a dream. But the voices of Mary and Charlotte soon assured him that it was real.

"And who robbed me of Jenny?" he inquired, as soon as his feelings would permit him to articulate.

"She was married to Mr. Percy on the 2nd of June last," said Mary.

"Mr. Percy!" echoed Warren.

At this moment Robert came in and intimated that the post boy was waiting for his gratuity.

"Will you be good enough to tell him," replied Warren, "that I will return in a few minutes, and therefore I wish him to wait."

"Pray remain awhile," said Mary. "You look so tired and weary. Let me order you some supper?"

"It is almost time for breakfast," returned Warren, with a forced laugh.

Mary Dale gave orders that some cold roast beef should be placed upon the table; and Charlotte made tea.

Warren sat down, and mechanically, but savagely, made a meal. His formerly intended sisters-in-law sat on either side of him, and chatted away as cheerfully as they could.

Warren looked six or seven years older than when they had last seen him. His eyes were sunken, and his hair was long, and it hung negligently about his forehead. His face,

too, was more swarthy ; and, altogether, he was not the same man whom they once remembered.

At the instance of the girls he narrated all that had happened to him since he last saw them ; and when it was concluded, he proposed to say "good bye" and return to London.

The girls did not press him to remain and see their father : for they were conscious it would be to the old man a very painful meeting.

Wrapping himself in his cloak, Warren bade Mary and Charlotte "farewell." He did all in his power to control his feelings : desperately did he strive to wait till he got into the chaise before he exhibited how much he was moved : but he was unequal to such a command over himself, and in their presence he burst into tears.

The kindness that Jenny Dale received at the hands of her husband, the pains he took to study her every whim and wish, the anxiety he evinced to render her life all that was agreeable, the delicate manner in which he helped her father, made her as comfortable and as happy as was any woman in the world. Jenny was naturally fond of gaiety, and so was Percy ; and knowing a very great number of persons they were constantly going out. This change of life was vastly enjoyed by Jenny, the more especially as she felt conscious she was very much admired.

They had been married about three months when one evening they met Doctor Knolle at a dinner party. Knolle had never called upon the Percys and seemed desirous of shunning them : but on this evening he paid Mrs. Percy a great deal of attention. Knolle had a quaint way of telling stories, which defied the most grave person in existence to look at him and not laugh.

On the evening in question Knolle sat beside Mrs. Percy at table, and he exerted all his quaintness and all his wit for her especial benefit. The consequence was, she laughed incessantly, and sometimes so loudly, (for, like a child at a play, she was carried off by what she saw and heard, and was forgetful of those near,) that she attracted the notice and observation of every one present. Knolle had just suggested the deferring the remainder of one of his stories till "some other time," when Jennette, who was still all country nature,

exclaimed so earnestly—"Ah! do tell me *now*, I beg of you," that the exclamation was heard through the room. Percy had a horror of women who made themselves conspicuous by boisterous laughter, and he could see several young men looking towards his wife, and then talking in an under tone. He loved Jenny so fervently that it was hardly possible for him to be angry with her; but with Knolle, who was evidently drawing her out, and making her laugh loudly on purpose, he was in a perfect rage. Percy tried to catch Jenny's eye, and give her a gentle look of remonstrance, which would have checked her *instanter*, but in vain. Knolle engrossed her attention so completely, she could not look to the right or to the left of him. It was not what Percy thought, that annoyed him. He felt sure his wife meant nothing; and that her manner was entirely the result of being extremely amused at Knolle's humourous conversation. But it was what the *others* would think, that galled him. He imagined, and very properly, that Jennette would get the character of flirting desperately with the rising Doctor; and to a proud and vain man, like Percy, there could not be a more unpleasant reflection. When the cloth was withdrawn, Jenny became even more conspicuous; for Knolle became serious and *impressive*, and Jenny's eyes were rivetted to the action of his face while he told her of some very sad tale which he heard, he said, only a few hours before. Knolle could see that Percy was vexed, but he did not care for that; on the contrary, he was rather pleased to observe this, for he regarded Percy's feelings at that moment as some recompence for what he had suffered.

When they went into the drawing-room, Knolle again seated himself by the side of Mrs. Percy, and concluded a story which he had not finished when the ladies rose from the table.

Percy approached Knolle and his wife, and began to chat with the former in a particularly confidential, but cheerful manner, which was intended to show the bystanders and the party in general that he and the Doctor were on the very best and most intimate terms; and that any little ebullition on the lady's part was nothing more than the result of a strong friendship between the gentleman and her husband. But the Doctor was bent on *revenge*; and scarcely taking notice of

Percy, he waited till he went away, and then resumed his emphatic and earnest discourse.

Jenny was as pure-minded as creature could be. She had heard of "flirting;" but as for knowing what it meant, she really did not. Like all persons who are ignorant of guile, she imagined there were no *degrees* of virtue or of vice, and that between being good and bad there was no middle stage. She was amused with Knolle's discourse, and she cared not who saw it and knew it.

The next morning Percy had a long conversation with his wife before he went to his chambers in Lincoln's Inn, where he was then established as a special pleader. She had not the most distant idea that she had attracted attention, or done anything which could create gossip or even a passing remark.

"Is it possible, my dear Jack," she inquired, "that a married woman cannot laugh for one evening with a man who strives to make himself agreeable, without being looked upon with suspicion, and talked of by her neighbours?"

"No Jenny, dear," he replied, "it is hardly possible. If all women were like yourself it would be otherwise. But they are not, and we must take the world as it is, and suit ourselves to its peculiarities. Why, dear, there are women in society who make a point of showing, by their manners to some other man whom they select for that purpose, that they have no regard for their husbands."

"Are there really, Jack?" she exclaimed.

"There are, Jenny," said Percy.

"I wonder society tolerates such a thing," she remarked.

"The fact is, dearest," said Percy, "the instances are so numerous, society cannot afford to raise its voice. In former days, that is to say, up to the beginning of this century, there was a hundred times the vice that now prevails; but it was kept secret and in the dark. Now-a-days, when, comparatively speaking, there is little or no vice, people seem anxious to put on its *appearance*. Don't laugh loudly and be exclusive again, Jenny."

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Warren arrived in town he took a lodging in St. James's-street. Having reported himself at the Horse Guards, he considered what he should do. He felt the most lonely being in existence. Warren had an old aunt, who lived on his estate in Cornwall, and it occurred to him that he would pay her a visit. But before he decided, he resolved to find out Frank Knolle and detail unto him all his grievances. He went into Fribourg and Pontet's shop, near the United Service Club, and requested a sight of the Red-book. He found his friend's address to be No. —, Cork-street.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Warren to himself. "This can hardly be Frank; and yet there are not two F. Knolles, Esq., M.D. Frank must be getting up in the world!"

Knolle *was* getting up in the world; but he was very extravagant, and spent every shilling of his income.

Warren was driven to Cork-street. The door was open, and he was shown into a room where some eight or ten young men of genteel appearance were sitting, reading the newspapers and the magazines. The Doctor had been up all night, the footman said, but he was then dressing and would be down in a few minutes.

Warren came out into the hall, and said to the footman, "Go up and tell Dr. Knolle that his brother George, who has just returned from India, is below, and if he has no objection he will come up stairs." While he spoke the man saw the very strong likeness to his master that still remained, and believing that Warren really was his brother, he hastened to deliver the message.

In another moment Knolle thrust his body over the balustrade and called, "What! my dear George! Come up, old fellow!"

Warren rushed up stairs and was warmly greeted by his old friend Frank.

They had a thousand things to say to each other, but neither of them then touched upon Jenny or Percy. When Knolle was dressed he seized Warren by the hand, and said,

"Now, my dear George, I must leave you for five or ten minutes. Come down into my room and amuse yourself till I come back. We will then breakfast together, and discuss the olden time. I never was so happy as I am to see you again; although you do look as though you had been suffering from a chronic jaundice and had been badly treated by some ship apothecary. I'll take a holiday to-day only for the purpose of setting you up."

Knolle was more than five or ten minutes performing his in-door work. He did not get through it under an hour-and-a-half. When he joined Warren, he rang the bell for breakfast; and over the meal they had a rapid conversation on matters personal. At length, Warren came to the point which interested him most.

"That was a nice trick," said he, "that Master Jack Percy played me in my absence."

"You mean about the little Dale," said Knolle.

"Yes."

"Oh, horrible, unpardonable, infamous! Do you know I have been very cold towards Jack ever since."

"I think," suggested Warren, "that it is one of those cases where the one man is bound to demand satisfaction of the other. What do *you* think, Knolle?"

"Upon my word, I think it is," said Knolle. "The girl was engaged to you?"

"Of course she was."

"And he knew it?"

"Of course he did."

"In that case, really," said Knolle, "nothing can possibly justify ——"

"What do you say to taking a message to Percy?"

"Why, my dear George," said Knolle, after deliberating, "I fear I could not be your friend, and I'll tell you why. When Percy supplanted you, I, thinking it was a great shame, endeavoured to supplant him."

"Oh! *you* proposed, too?"

"I did, as I tell you."

"You are a nice set of people in this country," said Warren, with a smile. "Well Frank, go on."

Knolle shrugged his shoulders, raised his eye-brows, pursed his lips, and, after a short silence, uttered, comically,

"I was rejected." "The fact is," continued Knolle, "I feel persuaded I should have succeeded; but Percy had the aid of a lady, against whose influence I had no chance."

Warren sighed.

"Nevertheless," pursued Knolle, with rapidity, "I congratulate both you and myself, George, as matters have turned out; for, to tell you the truth, her beauty is fading fast, and she's a very raw material."

"Do you see her often?" inquired Warren.

"No, very seldom," Knolle replied. "I met them the other night at a party, and drew her out beautifully, to Jack's utter disgust; and had not my hands been full—had I not so much to do—I'd cultivate them, it strikes me."

"But do not you think," asked Warren, "that I have a distinct ground for a personal quarrel?"

"Most undoubtedly," said Knolle. "But what is the use? Why not make the best of it? Go and call. Take it as a matter of course."

"I could not do that," said Warren.

"By the way," said Knolle. "I know a lady who is about to give a very gay ball. Percy and his wife are sure to be there. I will take you to call on the lady to-morrow. You had better put up here while you remain in town. It is to come off next Wednesday."

"Where does Jack Percy live?" asked Warren, after a long pause.

"In Bentinck-street," was the reply. "I believe Jack is doing very well for a junior, and they appear to live in very decent style. But I tell you what it is, George, there's nothing to be compared to a bachelor's life, after all."

"I believe you are right," said Warren.

"We are so independent, you see," rejoined Knolle.

"Of course we are. We can go out when we like, come home when we like, do what we like. I agree with you, Frank. Matrimony must be a bore."

"I'll be bound," said Knolle, "that Jack Percy would be very glad to change places with either of us at this moment."

Jack Percy was at that time leading the happiest life that ever fell to the lot of man. From ten o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon his mind was engaged in pursuits for which it was peculiarly fitted, and the exercise and labour

of the brain afforded him indescribable delight. In the evening he came home to a being who always met him with a sweet smile and an affectionate grasp. It was true that she was still what Knolle described her—"a raw material"—but she was gradually becoming a woman of sound sense, good judgment, and refined taste. She had almost forgotten that such a person as George Warren ever existed; and had she been satisfied that the letters she had written to him had been lost in the sea, or destroyed by his hand, he would very rarely have risen up in her imagination. But this was a matter she could not forget, and when she was alone it made her unhappy; for, in thinking of what she had written, she was carried back to scenes which touched the heart, and often moved the eyes to weeping. Many a time and oft had Jenny wondered what had become of George Warren—whether he was living or dead, married or still single. Often, too, had she wondered what she could say to him, if ever they met again.

At the especial desire of Captain Dale, Jenny's sisters had never given herself or Percy any information of George Warren's return. Indeed the old Captain had made Charlotte refuse an invitation to spend a month in town, for fear she might disclose what had passed at the cottage when Warren came back to claim Jenny for his wife. Much as the old soldier liked the manners of all three men, Percy, Warren, and Knolle, he felt there was a decidedly gunpowder look about their eyes, which would render any one of them a very disagreeable person to come into any sort of collision with, and he prayed most fervently that among themselves there would never be a clash.

Knolle took Warren with him, and called upon the lady whom he mentioned—a Mrs. Colderton. She had been in her day a great beauty, but "time had bereft her of all those dear charms," and neither the rouge, nor the enamel, nor the false teeth, nor the false hair, in any way made up for the deficiency. She was a woman open to any amount of flattery, which she always courted by saying she was getting very old, just for the sake of being contradicted. Mrs. Colderton had a great many friends in India, and when she heard that George Warren had lately returned from that region, she made numerous inquiries. In common with nearly all England,

Mrs. Colderton knew that India was India. But she had never considered that the presidencies are some short distance apart; and she took it for granted that a gentleman who had just come back from Bengal, must have known all her friends and relations in Bombay and Madras. But George Warren was not the man to explain away any erroneous notions previously conceived, and he therefore knew, of course, every soul she named. To the question as to how they were getting on, he replied, "Most prosperously." "How did their wives bear the climate?" "Oh! *extremely* well. They looked as blooming as ever." "Their children, too?" "Their mothers fancied that they thrived as well there as they would anywhere else."

It was to Warren a very amusing call, and for a few moments it soothed the feelings which tormented him—feelings which were tending to make him either base or reckless.

Mrs. Colderton gleaned, during the conversation, that Warren was staying with Knolle, and she invited him to her ball.

"What say you?" said Knolle, when they left Mrs. Colderton's. "What say you to calling on Mrs. Percy? Jack is at his chambers."

"Come along!" said Warren; and his heart beat quickly, as he uttered the words.

* * * * *

The coachman drove to Bentinck-street; but when they arrived at the door of Percy's house, George Warren had not the resolution to face Jenny, in the presence of the Doctor, whom he knew was also an admirer of hers.

"No, Frank!" he exclaimed. "I had rather not see her now."

"Then *I* must," said Knolle, "and *I will!*"

"No, no—come home!" urged Warren.

"I couldn't to save my life," returned Knolle; and he got out of the chariot and rapped at the door.

"Don't mention my name to her," said Warren, seeing that he was determined to see Jenny.

"I won't be long," said Knolle, as the door opened. "Not more than five minutes."

Mrs. Percy received Knolle kindly, but not cordially.

Percy had talked a great deal about him, and she was inclined to think, with Percy, that he had not behaved very well. But he was so amusing, and seemed in such good spirits, she could not help listening to his remarks with pleasure.

Knolle stayed for nearly a quarter of an hour with Mrs. Percy, and in her presence he quite forgot Warren, who sat in the carriage hatching all sorts of plots, and vowing to himself that he would be revenged on Percy.

"Are you going to this ball at Mrs. Colderton's?" Knolle asked of Mrs. Percy, when he was about to leave her.

"Yes," she replied. "That is to say if Mr. Percy can spare the evening."

"Spare the evening!" vociferated Knolle. "Why, I am sure *you* wish to go; and not only would I spare an evening to gratify you, but fifty evenings, or all the evenings of my life!" There was truth in what he said.

"I should very much like to go," replied the lady, "but, as I tell you, it all depends."

"Then, if you go," said Knolle, "you will dance with me before you dance with any one else? But if you do not go, pray let me know in time: for my hours are as valuable as Percy's, and I have no wish to throw them away."

It were impossible for any woman to hear this speech of the rising Doctor, and witness the very neat way in which he spoke it, and not feel complimented.

Mrs. Percy was not proof against such art, and she thought that Percy and herself had formed a somewhat illiberal opinion of Knolle. She said she would be most happy to dance with him.

"But how will you let me know whether you intend to be there or not?" he inquired.

"I will ask Mr. Percy to write you a note," she answered.

"Don't do that," rejoined Knolle. "I will call on Wednesday morning, and then you can tell me."

"I told you I would not be five minutes," said Knolle, when he took his seat in the carriage and ordered the coachman to drive to Cork Street.

"You have been an hour, at least," said Warren; "but never mind that. How did she look? And what did she say? Was she lively? Or how?"

"She looks rather well to-day," replied Knolle; "but she did not say much, and she was rather subdued. Why did you not come up, man?"

"I was afraid I should make a fool of myself, Frank," responded Warren; "and if the old girl invites me to her ball, I don't think I shall go. I feel as though I could not trust myself."

"What an idea!" quoth Knolle. "Why not be more matter of fact, George? She's gone—she's another's, and she never can be yours—and, enough."

"We shall see," muttered Warren.

"My dear George," exclaimed Knolle. "What do you mean? You don't mean to say that you would run off with her—supposing that she would agree to do so?"

"I don't know what I would do," said Warren.

"Consider, my dear fellow!" reasoned Knolle. "Put it in any light you like. Your own prospects—her misery in the reflections that would steal upon her in after life. The world's esteem, George. No! I am quite sure you would do nothing of that kind. Besides, she's devoted to Percy now. He is the best husband in the world, I am told."

While Knolle went on in this strain, he felt sorry that he had been so ready to obtain the means of a meeting between Warren and Mrs. Percy: for Knolle had, only a few minutes before, while he was talking to the lady, marked out a path which he intended to follow, and he did not like the idea of being interrupted by rivalry.

"If you think you cannot trust yourself, I would advise you not to see her," said Knolle.

"I'll do my best," said Warren, abstractedly.

"To do what?" inquired Knolle.

"To act properly," answered Warren.

"That's right!" said Knolle, as he laid his hand heavily on Warren's shoulder. "Always act with prudence, my dear boy, and you'll never regret it."

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs. PERCY did not tell her husband that Knolle had called. She wished to do so; but she did not know how to break it to him. She had thought over Knolle's conversation, and she was sorry he had promised to pay her another visit so soon, and with the avowed determination that her intentions, as to going to a party, would regulate his own. Had she told Percy he had called, she would have been led to tell him this also; and that was a matter she thought she might as well conceal. As the night of the ball drew nearer, Jenny grew the more nervous, and she the more repented she had not made her husband acquainted with the fact of Knolle having paid her a visit. She feared that in any conversation between Knolle and Percy it would be disclosed, and then her concealment would look strange and suspicious. She was bewildered, and resolved that she would stay at home; assigning to her husband a severe head-ache as the cause. But, then another difficulty presented itself. She knew that if she complained, Percy would be anxious about her; and she was not equal to any complicated acting.

The morning came on which Knolle was to call. As soon as Percy left the house his wife wrote a note to Knolle, to say they were unable to go. This she imagined would keep him away, and if they went (and it was Percy's intention to go) they would not meet him.

Jennette's note was in these words:—"My dear Mr. Knolle, I am very sorry we cannot go to the ball to-night; and the more so because you will also stay away, and thus be debarred a pleasant evening. Your's sincerely, JENNETTE PERCY."

She knew she was cheating the Doctor: but she was reconciled to the measure when she considered that it was all for the best.

Knolle was pleased to receive her note; but sorry it contained an intimation that he would not see her that evening, as well as a hint that he need not trouble himself to call upon her. Knolle said nothing to Warren about the note, or

its contents. He quietly put it into his waistcoat pocket, and while he was going his "rounds" he must have read it over at least thirty times. In short, while he was being driven from house to house—and some of the patients lived a long way from each other—his eyes were never taken off that little sheet of paper.

Warren, meanwhile, was stretched upon a couch in Knolle's drawing-room, perusing far more impassioned epistles; epistles which he had read so often that he knew them by heart; epistles which breathed of young and ardent love for him, and written by the hand which was then another's; epistles which spoke the emotions of a heart which had been weaned of its first and pure affection, and then warmed towards another object of regard. He wondered how she would meet him. Whether the sight of him would bring about a recollection of those days when they unto each other were devoted? He wondered whether a woman could unlove, having once loved?

He knew not how he would conduct himself in her presence; but he determined that he would speak to her and ascertain exactly whether there remained for him any of those feelings which she once entertained.

"And do you remember, dearest George," (he quoted aloud to himself a paragraph from one of Jenny's letters) "when Robert told tales of us! Oh! what happy days will those be when we meet again and recount the many sweet moments that together we have known."

CHAPTER VIII.

"JENNY, dear," said Jack Percy to his wife, when he returned from chambers, "we will go rather early to the ball; and when you are engaged to dance, I will slip away and return home for a few hours. I have to read some papers which must be sent out of chambers to-morrow, and every moment is of consequence just now. I will leave the room about ten. It will be filled by then, and I shall not be missed: and I will return for you at two; that will be late enough for you to remain, dearest."

Mrs. Percy knew that Percy would not make such a proposal unless he had a good reason for so doing; and she assented with cheerfulness. At half-past nine the Percys were in the ball-room, and in a quarter of an hour the apartments were sufficiently filled to admit Percy making his exit unobserved.

CHAPTER IX.

KNOLLE was very tired, and after dinner he fell asleep in his easy chair. Until half-past nine o'clock neither Warren nor the footman could wake him up. Knolle could never make his toilet under seventy minutes; so by the time they entered the ball-room it was past eleven.

During the brief space that Warren had breathed the air of England he had improved considerably in appearance; and as he had been trimmed by Mr. Truefitt, as of yore, the similarity of dress, added to the personal likeness, rendered it rather difficult for persons, to whom they were not intimately known, to distinguish the one from the other. The figures of the men were ridiculously similar, and likeness of the style, and the air, and the walk could not fail to attract

attention and notice. Mrs. Colderton stared when they walked up together to pay their respects, and after all she mistook Warren for Knolle, for she called him "Doctor," and Knolle "Captain."

Mrs. Percy was seated at the other end of the room, and was talking to a simpering simpleton who had expressed an opinion to a friend of his, in a whisper, that she was "a devilish fine woman!"

"What a pity that Mr. Percy did not join you," said Mrs. Colderton.

"They are not here to-night," said Knolle.

"Indeed they are," said Mrs. Colderton, "both of them. I should have been more delighted than I am, even, to have seen you as 'the three Calendars.'"

"You must be mistaken," said Knolle. "Percy is not here, surely."

"Why you told me he was to be here," said Warren.

"Yes; but I understood he could not come," replied Knolle, confusedly. "Are you sure, Mrs. Colderton?"

"Unless these eyes betray me," said the lady.

"I should not be surprised if they had betrayed you, out of spite," said Knolle.

"Why?" she asked, languidly.

"Why, because they have dazzled so many other people to please you, and you set no value on them whatever," remarked the Doctor.

"You are always profuse of compliments, Dr. Knolle," she said, distending her aged eyelids for admiration.

"Did I ever pay a compliment, George, that was not deserved?" He appealed to Warren.

"No, Knolle, you never did," said Warren, emphatically.

"No, Mrs. Colderton," Warren continued sweetly; "with all his faults the Doctor is given to the truth. He would as soon think of paying a bill, as a compliment."

Jenny was looking at Knolle and Warren, and the colour mounted to her cheeks and was soon diffused over her face and neck. She did not dream it was Warren. She fancied that Percy had played her a trick, and that he had taken his departure only to "dress up" with the Doctor.

She felt satisfied that Percy was aware of Knolle's call; that they were in a league; and she knew not what to say in

answer to the charge her husband might bring against her, that of having kept from him what she knew. "The deceiver is deceived," said Jennette to herself, and she could have cried with vexation.

Knolle and Warren walked round the room. Their eyes were in search of two different persons. Knolle's were in quest of Mrs. Percy; Warren's in quest of her husband. Before he gave himself up to gazing on Jenny, he desired to breath out a sigh to the hatred. He longed to look at Percy, and by a look to insult him, and his longing was sharpened by the knowledge that Jack was a sort of a man who would not suffer his own father to look crooked at him, without putting the matter straight.

The eyes of Knolle and Warren simultaneously caught sight of Mrs. Percy, and they bowed simultaneously, and simultaneously the hearts of both men were heaving with the same passion. Could their thoughts have made acquaintance, at that moment, there had been a conflict. As wild beasts of the same species, when inflamed with jealousy, they would have been ready to tear each other to pieces; for the noblest intellect that God ever granted to man is ready to bend itself to folly when love excites his soul.

"I'll take you up, and re-introduce you to her," said Knolle to Warren, hoping he would object.

"Thank you, I will not speak to her *now*," said Warren.

"Where's Percy?"

"Then let *me*," said Knolle.

Warren presently unlinked himself, and stood in a doorway to look on at the dancing.

Knolle walked up to Mrs. Percy, and declared his surprise and his delight at seeing her. She knew by his voice it was not her husband; and she accused Knolle of all sorts of treachery; and she said, playfully, that Percy was quite as bad as himself.

"He may be as bad," said Knolle; "but depend upon it he is not so good."

"I do not see much to choose between you," said she.

Knolle looked steadfastly at Mrs. Percy, with a feeling of respect which drove away all that belongs to the common world.

Had Prince Albert broken his neck, and had the ingenious

Dr. Knolle been sent for to try and set it, he would just then have talked on to Mrs. Percy without the slightest reference to royalty's behest.

Mrs. Percy did not allude to the deceit of which she imagined Knolle had been guilty in leaguings with her husband. She was too proud and too prudent for that. She talked as though she had been a party to the supposed arrangement, while she attempted to convey the idea that her husband wished Knolle to know she knew nothing about it.

"You are engaged to me for this gallopade," said Knolle.

She said, "no," in a tone which indicated that the simperer, who sat beside her, was her partner elect.

"I impale you on your promise made some days ago."

"But you said since you would not be here."

"Can you plead that?"

Jenny was not a woman of the world, and she never was intended for one. She said, bluntly rather, "Well, you must settle it between you."

The simperer had just sense enough to see how the lady's inclination lay, and, looking at the Doctor, he observed smilingly, "If you were previously engaged to Mrs. Percy, of course I have no —."

The Doctor saw that the young man was in a difficulty to deliver himself of the remainder of the sentence, and Knolle assisted him, by dipping his chin into his cravat, (a movement which passed muster for a bow), and then offered his arm, and led Mrs. Percy away.

"Where is Percy to-night?" asked Knolle.

"What nonsense!" she replied. "Do you think I am ignorant of all this?"

"Of what?"

"Why, that you and he came into the room together," and she looked at Warren, who stood gazing on her, and she nodded her head, reproachfully, at him.

Knolle, who was sharpness itself, saw that she was labouring under a delusion.

"You don't mean to say that is Percy?" he said.

"I ought to know my own husband," she replied.

"Look again," said Knolle.

"I have looked," said Mrs. Percy.

"Well, and what do you say?"

" Shall I tell you what I think?"

" Yes."

" That is ~~more~~ ~~more~~ ~~younger~~ and ~~more~~ ~~handsomer~~ than it is ~~one~~ of the ~~Chandos~~."

" Is ~~you~~ ~~more~~ to ~~say~~ it is ~~handsomer~~ than I ~~am~~?"

" Much handsomer."

" And handsomer than George Warren."

" Much handsomer, and ~~cleverer~~ than either of you."

The enthusiasm with which she said this threw a coldness over Knolle, which made him savage and satirical.

" You have been honest," he observed; " and now I will be honest. You are neither so handsome, so clever, nor so good hearted as your sister Mary."

" Have you ever told her so?"

" No."

" Then pray, do; for I assure you, Dr. Knolle, you are the greatest favorite Mary has."

" Are you serious?"

" I am, indeed!"

" Then, I'll propose to Mary to-morrow. But do you think I shall be accepted?"

" I do. But if you doubt my word, ask Mr. Percy."

" I shall come and see you early to-morrow morning, and have a long talk with Jack," said Knolle; " and then I will be indisposed for a week, and go down to Kenilworth for a change, from worse to better. But now I have told you this, Mrs. Percy, tell me seriously, do you think that poor George Warren, who is watching us there, is your husband?"

She looked at Knolle, and then at Warren, whose eyes were still upon her. A revolution passed over her, poor creature. " Tell me, Dr. Knolle," she uttered as well as she could, " are you jesting? or are you not? Is not that my husband?"

The most frivolous, or the most heartless being that ever breathed, could not have beheld that face, overspread as it was with anxiety, without being moved to seriousness. Knolle replied, " It is George Warren. He is staying with me."

Mrs. Percy again looked at Warren, who stood as a *tableau vivans*. His eyes were upon hers. She felt giddy, and asked Knolle to retire from the dance. He led her to a

couch. She wished to go home, and inquired the hour. It was only half-past twelve. At two, Percy would be there. She could not ask Knolle to take her home; and yet she feared she would faint, and make an exhibition, if George Warren approached her. Knolle talked to her; but though she heard his words, she knew not what he said. Mrs. Colderton came up and introduced to Mrs. Percy a gentleman who wished to dance with her. She was engaged; but she recollected nothing, and bowed assent to the proposal. The stranger stayed near her, and leant over her; and Knolle, unfortunately, was, by Mrs. Colderton, taken from her side. He saw Mrs. Percy no more that evening; for an anxious man took Knolle into the hall, talked to him for two minutes, and then whisked him away to a mansion, nine miles distant from London, where he was detained twenty-four hours.

Warren watched his opportunity; and, quietly gliding across the room, stood opposite to Mrs. Percy. He extended his hand, and she extended hers; but she could not look into Warren's face. He pressed the tips of her fingers, and an electric-like shock ran through every one of their veins.

"I paid you a visit, Mrs. Percy, the earliest moment possible after my arrival — but I did not find you at home," said Warren.

"Do not reproach me, Mr. Warren," she replied.

"I had not the least intention of reproaching you," returned Warren; "but your request would induce a belief that you were conscious of deserving reproach."

"It was not my fault," she muttered, artlessly. "Be assured it was not."

"The room has become exceedingly warm," said Warren, "and some of the wiser people have walked out on the parterre; let us follow their example." He offered his arm, which she could not refuse, though some one seemed to whisper to her that she was doing wrong.

"Tell me, what was not your fault?" said Warren, when there was no chance of being over-heard.

"Do not ask me—do not torture me, Mr. Warren," she returned. "The past can never be repaired, and it were better that we never saw each other again. I cannot talk to you of the past. I am the wife of your friend."

"No, no!" said Warren, "not the wife of my *friend*. But that is of no moment. This is the last time, probably, we shall ever meet, and you need not fear any annoyance, or any pain from the sight of me. I shall leave England very shortly for ever; but before I part with you, I desire to know one thing. Was the affection which you evinced for me, in former days—were the sweet words you breathed for me—from the heart, or only from the lips? Tell me this; for, in exile, it will be sweet to know the truth."

"How can you doubt me," she asked.

"Have you not given me cause?"

"I implore you—I beseech you," said Jenny, "to cease this conversation; I am not equal to sustain it; besides, I feel that it is wrong to continue it."

"The love I had for you is still unabated, and for your sake, I will not say another syllable. Nay, more, I will leave you this very instant, never to see your dear face again, if my presence gives you pain." He spoke these words so softly and so earnestly, that Mrs. Percy's eyes were disposed to betray her emotion, and it was no easy task for her to keep back her tears.

"Shall I bid you farewell *now*?" he asked her.

She longed to say "Yes;" but she faltered, "No."

"Your sisters told you that I had paid them a visit on my return?" said Warren.

"No! They have never mentioned your name to me."

"How very odd," replied Warren, with a forced laugh.

"I suppose their lips are now forbidden to speak that once familiar name?"

Mrs. Percy made no reply. She feared the hour was approaching when her husband would come and lead her away from Warren, and to her home. She feared he would be angry when he saw them sitting out alone, and saw Warren talking to her with that confiding air which ever and anon he wore. She had more than once fancied that Jack was jealous when she talked so long to Knolle at the dinner-party, and she knew that he would rather that she talked to him than to Warren. She dreaded a scene; for she was aware that George Warren was hasty and passionate, and so was her husband. She knew that a word—a single word—would induce, perhaps, a deadly quarrel.

"I am afraid," faltered Mrs. Percy, "that I am breaking my engagements."

"That surely cannot give you any uneasiness," remarked Warren. "It is the easiest thing in the world to do. But I will take you into the room again. Before I do so, let me say 'Farewell' to you on this spot—for ever. God bless thee, Jenny! and may'st thou be as happy as I wish thee to be! We shall never meet again in this world. Farewell, dearest! If ever you think of me, and I be living, know that your thoughts will be of one who will think of you and love you unceasingly. I often reflect upon you harshly; but that harshness soon lapses into tenderness. Farewell, dearest! *and for ever!*"

Poor Mrs. Percy almost fainted. She was curious to know whither he was going: but she had not the power to inquire. She pitied him with all her heart and soul; and the recollection of his last parting with her, now vividly brought before her, made her feel even more bitterness than she felt on the former occasion.

"Do not say 'for ever!'" she involuntarily uttered with a sigh, as he withdrew the hand that pressed her own so fervently.

"Would you like to see me once more?"

"Yes."

"Then it must be soon, for in ten or twelve days I embark for the Cape of Good Hope. I shall effect an exchange into a dragoon regiment there, and after a few years' service, I shall settle near the Caffres. I have promised to pay your sisters a visit before I go, and I will keep my word, and take a long farewell of the spot where the happiest scenes of my life were enacted—those ruins! and that little room, where Robert once intruded upon us! I will contrive to see you once more! God bless you, dearest!"

Warren led Mrs. Percy into the room again. She was besieged instanter; but she declined to dance any more. She was flurried, and under the impression that she was a sinner. Warren bade her "good night," and shortly afterwards escaped from the room. The moment he was gone, Mrs. Percy was comparatively a happy woman.

Percy did not return to the room till nearly three o'clock. Mrs. Colderton had missed him, and his wife had made

excuses for him. The old lady expressed her sorrow that he had not come with Dr. Knolle and Captain Warren. This startled Percy, and he made inquiries and discovered that Knolle and Warren had appeared as two of the Calendars.

The old lady further told Percy that she liked Captain Warren extremely.

Percy sought his wife, and in silence took her to the carriage.

"How jaded you look, Jack," she remarked, as the door was closed, and she beheld her husband's face by the light of a large torch.

"I am very tired," said Percy. "I tell you what it is, Jenny, I shall give up going to these balls. They are abominably monotonous! Did you dance much?"

"No, Jack. Only once."

"With whom?"

"Dr. Knolle."

"Oh! *he* was there?"

"Yes."

"Did you enjoy yourself?"

"I cannot say that I did. As you very truly observe, these balls are very monotonous."

Percy did not like to mention Warren's name. He had very rarely done so since they were married. The thought of Warren always disturbed him, for Percy was aware he had wronged him, and to think of those whom we have wronged, is very far from pleasing. It turns us against ourselves, and that induces us to desire a further perpetration of wrong. Percy hardly knew whether Jenny was right or not, in forbearing to say that she had seen George Warren. He disliked the idea of her keeping anything from him, and yet to have listened to those lips breathe the name of a man whom he knew had often kissed them, would have stirred up his soul to something very nearly allied to vengeance.

Percy closed his eyes, but he could not sleep, although he was very tired. He lay awake, wondering whether George Warren would show any disposition to renew the acquaintance that formerly existed.

At ten o'clock next morning, Percy and his wife sat down to breakfast. They were usually chatty people, for Percy was a man who provoked conversation; but on that morning

they scarcely exchanged a word with each other. Mrs. Percy was absent and nervous, and Percy was thoughtful, and pretended to be intent on the work he had taken in hand on the previous night. He occasionally glanced at his wife, and fancied the manner in which she played with her watch chain was either frivolous, or too full of abstraction. In short, Percy was jealous, and his passion was the more inflamed by the reflection that his wife was a species of "stolen property," whose owner was uncomfortably close at hand.

A two-penny-postman struck the door, and delivered a letter which was put into Percy's hands.

"This is for you," said Percy, throwing it across the table. "The hand-writing is Knolle's. What can he have to say?"

Mrs. Percy coloured when she broke the seal. Her husband's eyes were upon her the while, though she did not see them.

She read the letter and put it down.

Percy feigned to be intent upon some papers; and after a silence of about five minutes, he asked what Knolle had to say?

"Some of his nonsense," Jenny replied. "I cannot make out what he means."

"Shall I assist you?"

"Yes, do." She gave him the epistle and he read a poetic favour beginning thus:—

" You told me that you would'nt go to the ball,
But it seems, my dear madam, you went after all.
To play at contrary with *me* were a shame;
But you see that 'the Doctor' can play at the game."

"Did you tell him that you would not go to that ball?"

"Yes, dear."

"When?"

"The day he called."

"You never told me that he had called. You know that I have frequently observed on his excessive rudeness in not calling here, and yet when he does call I am not informed of it. The scrapes," continued Percy, "that women get men into, by such folly as this, are countless. However, there is an impertinent allusion in that letter which I shall not put up with. Just take a pen and ink, and write according to

my dictation. He will know that I understand him, if you don't: and he will also know that it was I who told you to write thus—"

She trembled, and took up a pen.

Percy walked up and down the room, and thus dictated:—

"My dear Dr. Knolle, I've received your long letter,
The doggerel is dreadful—the taste is no better.
I know not 'contrary,' nor one of its rules
But I've heard that the game was invented for foo ls,
And as you, Dr. Knolle, are so witty and wary
I'd ne'er think of playing with you as contrary."

"I'll fold it up," cried Percy, when it was finished.
"Now then, dear, address it to him."

The letter was addressed to Dr. Knolle at — house, where Knolle said he was still detained, and thither it was despatched through the post.

Warren went home to Knolle's house and walked round the drawing-room till daylight. He made himself as miserable as a man invariably does under such circumstances. That Jenny was his by right he was fully persuaded, and he wondered how a man could be so lost to every feeling of honour and pride as to propose to a girl who was engaged to another man, and that man his friend?

"If I am shot for it," he muttered, "I will carry out my resolve;" and Warren gnashed his teeth like a savage.

Percy went to his chambers; but he could not work. He tore up in disgust a variety of papers of which he had approved only the day before. He was glad to get away from his home; and now that he was in chambers, he wished that it was five o'clock that he might return to it. With Knolle he was annoyed. With Warren he was infuriated, for coming back to make him uncomfortable. With his wife he was angry, for not disclosing unto him all that she knew. "If she ever dare," he began a sentence, but before he could finish it his love for "dear Jenny" made him sorry that his brain could conceive such a thing as even a threat towards her.

Percy had little idea of the conflicting passions that were gathering in every quarter, ready to burst forth violently and fiercely. Jennette had loved George Warren devotedly. Her love for Percy was a foster affection which she had

suffered to supplant, or, rather, which she had been prevailed upon to suffer to supplant, the natural offspring of her own heart. She was distracted : for there is no shutting out such thoughts ; and the more we attempt to baffle memory, the more signal is memory's victory over us. It was her duty to forget Warren and to cling to Percy. Her love—her first love—made her remember Warren, and in that remembrance Percy was placed at a distance. She had many acquaintances in London ; but she had very few intimate friends. She was premeditating a letter to Mrs. Shandus, and one to her sister Charlotte—the most sensible of all the Dales—when the governess of Mrs. Shandus's family was announced. She had been sent to London to break to Mrs. Percy the death of her father, who had died rather suddenly. Jenny was deeply afflicted ; and bitterly did she repent that she had ever left the peaceful abode where she was the old man's darling.

When Percy came home he found his wife in tears. When the cause was made known, he busied himself in consoling her. Percy was much attached to his father-in-law. He loved the old Captain for that fine manly spirit, which, in spite of age, the old Captain carried in his countenance.

Mrs. Percy fretted all the day for her father. In the evening she began to think of her sisters and her brothers. She knew not what they would do. It was a hard matter for them to live and make an appearance during her father's lifetime ; but now that he was gone she was at a loss to imagine how they could be supported.

“ Poor boys ! ” she exclaimed.

Percy guessed what she was thinking of, and to set her mind at ease, without wishing her to suppose he felt burdened, he began a conversation with her.

“ Your father lived to a good age, Jenny dear,” said Percy. “ Indeed it is to be wondered at, how he carried that wound so long. He was a good old man, and you were all good children. I am thinking what arrangement we can make about our brothers and sisters. Mary and Charlotte, of course, will come here. We are their protectors. My difficulty is the boys. I could send them all to a country grammar-school, but then they would be cut off from the rest of you ; and I shouldn't like to have them in town. London is

a bad place for young boys. But never mind, dear; we must go down, and see them, and arrange all these matters."

There was something so kind in the tone of Percy's voice, something so cheerful in the way he expressed his readiness to support all her dependent relations, that when she looked into his face, and thought of what had so lately passed in her own mind, she was overcome by feelings of gratitude, and seizing his hand, she pressed it between her own palms, and wept bitterly.

When Knolle received Mrs. Percy's reply and read it, he became faint with rage. He knew well enough by whom it was dictated. It was his intention, at first, to write Percy a letter, and tell him his mind; but discretion induced him to do nothing of the sort.

"For if I do," reasoned Knolle, "he may have a double laugh at me. He may say, 'This is the first I have heard of it. I shall tell my wife not to write to you in future.'"

That night Knolle returned to town, and had a consultation with George Warren.

"You remember, George, that day," said Knolle, "that I called on Mrs. Percy?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, she told me that she was going to the ball, but subsequently she wrote to me to say that she meant to stay away. When I got there I saw her. Waiting and loitering about that place, where I have been detained so long, I amused myself by writing a letter to her."

Warren smiled, but a sneer was mixed with the smile.

"The contents of my letter were perfectly harmless; but I'll repeat to you, word for word, what I said."

Knolle repeated, and Warren laughed.

"You will acknowledge, George, that there was nothing in that?"

"Nothing, Frank."

"Well, sir, read her reply, and give me your impartial, unbiassed, and unprejudiced opinion." He placed the reply in Warren's hand.

"You know who dictated that, George?"

"Percy, of course."

"Your doggrel is dreadful, your taste is no better."

“There’s no doubt Percy wrote it and she copied it,” said Warren.

“Did you ever read such an insulting note in your life?”

“No, never!”

“And so utterly unprovoked?”

“Utterly unprovoked!”

“What would *you* do, George, if you were treated in such wise?”

“I’d have an interview with him *instantly*, at eleven paces.”

“It seems to me there’s no alternative.”

“None! You must have him out.”

“Very well. Take him a message. I regard the attack he makes as very cowardly. He makes it through his wife, you see.”

“When I asked you to take Jack Percy a message from me,” said Warren, “I acted under irritated feelings, which blinded my judgment. I did not see how wrong it would be for you to enter into the quarrel. For the same sound reasons which you gave me then, in calmness, I now must decline to be your friend. Get a perfect stranger to Percy to call upon him; but, recollect, there is no time to be lost; and let it be explained you have only just returned to London; for you say you got this letter yesterday.”

Knolle wrote to a man who delighted in quarrels—a Mr. Litsley—one who had so many affairs of his own, and who had been “second” to so many people, that he took up a duel in the same sort of way that a lawyer would take up a suit, or a doctor a patient.

Mr. Litsley came and heard the case. He was of opinion that there was not a loop-hole—that nothing could atone—that Percy was responsible.

“You will have no trouble,” said Knolle, “for he is a Calendar, Litsley, and it was a rule with the Calendars never to retract, and never to apologise, but always fight.”

Mr. Litsley drove up to Bentinck-street, quite prepared that Percy should fight Knolle.

Mr. Litsley sprang from his cabriolet, and rapped at the door. “Is Mr. Percy within?” he inquired.

“No, Sir,” said the servant.

“Is he at his chambers?”

"No, Sir. News is come of the death of the misses's father, and they've both gone down to the country."

"When will Mr. Percy return?"

"That I cannot say, Sir."

Disgusted and disappointed, Mr. Litsley returned to Knolle.

"I believe it is all a *ruse*," exclaimed Litsley, when he sat himself opposite to the Doctor.

"What is?"

"Why, they say that his wife's mother or father—I forget which—is dead, and that they have gone down into the country."

"You don't say so?"

"I do, and I believe it is all stuff," said Litsley.

"You do Percy wrong," said Knolle. "Poor old Captain! It must be he; for her mother died ages ago. Poor old Dale! I am glad you did not see Percy, Litsley. What he will do with that family, I know not." And tenderer thoughts stole over the hasty Doctor, and again he expressed how glad he was that Percy had not received a hostile message from him.

"Many thanks for your kind offices, my dear Litsley," said Knolle, when Litsley rose to depart; "but as matters have turned out, I am very sorry that I ever thought of soliciting them."

CHAPTER X.

WARREN had seen much more of Captain Dale than Knolle had ; and when he heard of the old man's death, and recollected all his stories about "forlorn hopes," and romantic engagements in Spain, he graphically pictured to himself the grief that might be witnessed at the little cottage. Warren's soul was subdued, and he desired to be alone. Since his return to England he had set the old man down to be selfish, and as one who had sold his daughter to a present best advantage ; but when he was told that the old man was dead, he forgave him, and only thought of him with kindness and esteem.

Warren was aware that Percy's means, other than those which resulted from his profession, were far from extensive ; and Knolle had assured Warren that Percy did not earn more than four hundred or five hundred a-year. He concluded, therefore—and not erroneously—that the family of the late Captain Dale would considerably impoverish Percy ; and, revolving all this in his mind, George Warren became so excited and so wretched, that he was standing on the very border of insanity.

Some days after Captain Dale was consigned to his last home, his papers were examined by Percy in the presence of his wife and her sisters. A will was found bequeathing the little their father had to leave to his children, in equal proportions. A packet was also found, carefully endorsed "important." This packet was opened, and its contents discovered to be a somewhat curious correspondence that had passed between a military chief of great renown and Captain Dale, when they were both ensigns. The old Captain had never alluded to this correspondence, had never spoken of it to any one living or dead. He had preserved it evidently for some purpose, and a question arose as to what was to be done with it.

Percy suggested that it should be destroyed. But Charlotte Dale objected. "Who knows," said she, "but that it may be the means of getting Robert, and, perhaps, the others, a commission ? It will introduce them, at all events."

Percy smiled at her foresight and shrewdness, and gave the packet into her custody. Sundry other papers were examined and little documents of no value, but as relics, allotted and distributed.

“And what is this?” said Percy, opening a sheet of foolscap paper, and beholding the hand-writing of George Warren. He coloured as he read the paper, and would fain have thrown it into the fire. It was a will, and in these words:—

“I, George Warren, a lieutenant in the——th regiment of foot, being about to proceed to India, where sickness prevails to a great extent, and where life is very uncertain, do hereby make this my last Will and Testament. I give and bequeath to Jennette Dale, youngest daughter of Captain Dale, late of the ——th Regiment, all my estates in Cornwall, and every thing else that I die possessed of. But I charge the said estate with these annuities—

“1st—£300 per annum to my aunt, Susan Warren.

“2nd—£100 per annum to Mary Dale, eldest daughter of the said Captain Dale.

“3rd—£100 per annum to Charlotte Dale, second daughter of the said Captain Dale.

“4th—£50 per annum to each of Captain Dale’s sons.

“5th—To Captain Dale I leave my horses, *Weed* and *Cheroot*; also the sum of £700 which is owing to me by Captain Gordon, of my Regiment, for money lent to him in November last.

“I appoint my friends, John Percy, Esq., of Lincoln’s Inn, and Dr. Francis Knolle, my executors.

“To the former I give my father’s library, and as it is full of Law books, I hope it will be of use to him. To the latter I give the picture of one of the beauties of Hampton Court, painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

“GEORGE WARREN.”

Percy was in a difficulty when he read this will. It made him hate George Warren more than he could express. He was ashamed that he hated him; but he could not help it. He would have gladly destroyed the document; but that he had no right to do. He desired his wife to retire, and in her absence he read the will aloud to her sisters.

How was Percy to address George Warren when he sent

him the will, which was still a valid document, although it was in part virtually cancelled? The question perplexed him. At first he wrote a formal note; but he was not pleased with it; and he sat down to indite a more friendly and kinder communication in these words:—

“MY DEAR GEORGE,—On looking over the papers of the late Captain Dale I found the accompanying document. It is right that I should return it to you. The circumstances under which it was framed are of a nature different to those which now exist, and I shall be glad to hear that you have destroyed it. When I read your intentions, my dear Warren, in a measure I reproach myself, but I was and am consoled by the reflection that had I been you, and you myself, that whatever disappointment you have felt, would have fallen to my lot. This is a subject far too delicate to admit of many words, and I therefore dismiss it as abruptly as I have entered upon it. Believe me, my dear Warren, when I say that I have the greatest regard for you; that I cherish the memory of the many happy moments that in former days we knew in common; that I respect your high principle as much as I admire your talents and your good sense; and that if fate permitted me to select one man in the world who was to enjoy a greater share of happiness than the rest of mortals my choice would fall upon you. Let me conclude, my dear George, by saying what Bolingbroke wrote to Swift. ‘I love you for a thousand things, for none more than for the regard you have for all the sons of Adam.’ Believe me, ever faithfully, JOHN PERCY.”

The above letter disarmed George Warren. He paced the apartment and reasoned on the absurdity of making himself and others miserable in a vain cause. He placed his hand before his eyes, and quietly inquired of his own mind, and of his inmost heart, whether there was truth in Percy’s observation,—that he would have wooed and won, if possible, Jennette Dale with her engagements, whatever they might be, and with whomsoever made? He received an affirmative reply, and his injury did not appear so great unto him. Warren was a man of high principle and of great integrity, and he resolved to conquer, on moral grounds, the inclinations which he had of late encouraged.

* * * * *

Warren and Knolle had dined, and the latter began to be facetious over his Burgundy.

"George, my boy," said he, "why are you so silent? You have not spoken a word for the last half-hour. It is useless to fret oneself to death. Life is too short for that sort of thing. Drink, George, drink!"

"I have a great deal to think of, Knolle."

"Well, what of that? Be happy!"

"I have received a letter to-day from Jack Percy. You shall read it." He handed the letter to Knolle.

"Just like Jack Percy!" exclaimed Knolle, when he returned it. "Straight forward, and to the point. He is quite right. You know, George, you *would* have urged your suit in his absence. So would I. Don't deny it, George. If you do, I won't believe you. Love makes liars of us all. Too often it makes us more than liars. Fill your glass, and drink to Jack Percy!"

Warren smiled, and filled his glass to the very brim.

"We will drink to him afterwards," said Warren. "But let this one be drained to the memory of my love for Percy's wife!"

"I'll drink the toast with right good glee!" cried Knolle, "for *my* love for her was quite as great and as good as *yours*."

They drained their goblets to the dregs, and Warren fancied himself a much better, and more moral member of society.

Warren was about to refill to Jack Percy, when Knolle called out, "That bottle is nearly empty; we will have a fresh one, and in taking the first glass of it, we will drink to Mary—the future Mrs. Knolle."

"You are such a humbug, Frank," said Warren, withdrawing his hand from the bottle, "that I never know when to believe you; but if you have one spark of candour in your composition, tell me if you are really serious?"

"I am, upon my honour!" Knolle replied. "I have written to her a letter of condolence, just to prepare the way for my offer, which she is certain to accept. And I wrote a note to Jack, too, bullying him for that letter of his; and I told him to secure Mary for me, by way of atonement for his sins."

"Knolle! you have conspired against your friend!"

ejaculated Warren. "You suffered me to think you hated Jack as much as I did, and now you confess to a correspondence with him."

"In matters of this kind, my dear George," returned the Doctor, "very, very few men scruple to take an advantage, be it even a mean one, provided it conduce to gaining the end in view. When objects of affection are concerned, the most upright men in the world—upright in other matters I mean—do not hesitate to lie direct, or by implication. Honour, good faith, and so forth, are all nonsense, in affairs relating to the other sex. Depend on't, physical man is a very queer compound. But no matter, drink to Mary, fill your glass!"

Charlotte was next toasted in a bumper, and by this time the two Calendars were considerably cut.

Percy's health was then proposed by Knolle.

"How do you mean to reply to Jack's letter?" asked Knolle.

"We will see about that to-morrow," said Warren.

Knolle got up, his step was very unsteady, and he placed before Warren, pen, ink, and paper.

Warren wrote as follows:—"MY DEAR PERCY,—I have received yours of the —th, and its enclosure. Knolle and I have just drank your health. I am somewhat 'screwed' just now, and therefore when I say, I know you *will* believe me.—Believe me, your's ever sincerely, GEORGE WARREN."

"P.S.—Read Charles Lamb's lines to a friend on his marriage, and fancy, my dear Jack, that I wrote them to *thee*.—G. W."

Knolle found the lines in Lamb's works, and read them before he approved. That done, he rose and expressed himself ready to go to Drury Lane—but at that moment a person of some eminence drove up to the door, and impatiently requested to see Dr. Knolle. They talked together for a few minutes, and Knolle had to apologise to Warren and proceeded to a house not very far off.

He was absent for about two hours. He had in that interval rescued a very beautiful woman, a lady of rank, from the very jaws of death, by the slightest exercise of his own genius—exercised, too, in inebriated moments. But such is the ingratitude of the world, that poor Knolle got no

credit for his pains. On the contrary, he was talked of as having visited a patient when he was quite drunk; while in a medical circle he was spoken of as having endangered a life, and of having broken through professional etiquette, because forsooth he yielded some absurd explanation of an over anxious husband.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Percy received Knolle's note, and when he saw his letter to Mary, his mind was made comparatively easy, and he took an opportunity of extolling Frank Knolle to the skies—as one of the finest fellows that ever breathed. This somewhat startled Mrs. Percy, inasmuch as she had been accustomed of late to hear the Doctor spoken of as a man whose person and mind had of late degenerated. But she made no remark, and inwardly congratulated her sister on her good fortune, in having attracted the attention of a person so clever, and so generally liked.

* * * * *

It was a clear and cold evening, and Percy proposed to his wife and her sisters that they should walk and see the Shanduses. But Mrs. Percy was not able to accompany them, she felt tired.

Percy was unwilling to leave her alone: but at her especial request, he escorted the party.

They had not been gone ten minutes, when Mrs. Percy fell asleep, and dreamt of the days when, in that very room, she had often said to Warren, "Dont be foolish, George, dear, Why should you take my comb out? How *very* silly of you?" But her slumbers and her dreams were broken by a noise in the hall. Percy's servant and the maid of the cottage had had a slight difference; and the maid, in a frenzy, rushed into the room, almost before Mrs. Percy recollected *herself*, and bawled out in a typhon of rage, "If you please,

ma'am, this man says I'm not to be trusted with Mr. Percy's letters."

"I shall not fail to acquaint Mr. Percy with what has occurred," said Jenny. "What letters do you allude to?"

"These, ma'am," replied the girl, and she gave Mrs. Percy some four or five, which she acknowledged she had "*snatched*" from the man's hand.

Mrs. Percy was exceedingly vexed at being disturbed, and in order to punish the man-servant, who was very lazy as well as impudent, she ordered him to walk over to Mr. Shandus's house, and there await his master's commands.

Jenny endeavoured to sleep again, but in vain; so she arose, and wandered into the little garden which fronted the cottage. She looked toward the distant woodlands, and indulged in a *reverie*, and turning her eyes to the left, she could behold the ruins, looking as grim and grey as was her own young heart. Again she was disturbed. The girl came up and begged that Mrs. Percy would not tell the master of what had taken place. "I don't think he meant it, mum," she sobbed; "and I'm very sorry that I was so violent."

Jenny had a kind heart of her own, and she could not bear to see any one in distress. "Leave off crying, Ann," she said. "Don't let it happen again. There, now: there has been quite enough of it. Go, and bring me the letters which caused this quarrel."

Percy had requested his wife to write to a milliner in London, for some mourning for her sisters, and she expected a reply by that day's post.

The girl brought the letters and placed them in Mrs. Percy's hand. None of them were addressed to her, and she was disappointed. But it occurred to her that the superscription of one letter was in a hand-writing which was very familiar to her eyes. She looked at it once more; but she doubted. The dash at the right end of the address was not like George Warren's; and the name of "Percy" was in such straggling letters, and blotted. She had the curiosity to look at the seal, and on her examination all doubts were at once removed. There was his crest, and the words "*virtus in arduis*" plainly perceptible. She grew pale, and returned to the cottage—placed the letters on the mantel-piece—and gazed on the fire, which was almost extinguished. She scarcely

knew what she was doing, but she separated Warren's letter from the rest, and placing it on her heart (where she had before placed many a letter of his), she again went into the little garden, and, while she paced the narrow paths, she racked her brain to think what that letter could contain.

"Dear Jack!" she exclaimed to herself, "I would not have you offended for the world, nor would I have your life endangered—Dear George!"

The sound of carriage wheels reached her ears. She looked down the lane and saw the old barouche, which Mr. Shandus used as a hack carriage, approaching. She ran into the house. She had but little time to think of what she was to do. Whether to destroy the letter from Warren or not? She was ignorant that her husband had written to Warren. She kissed the letter and then placed it with the others, hoping that all would be well.

The carriage contained her relations only. They came in and gathered round her; her boisterous brothers, her kind and tender sisters, and her devoted husband.

* * * * *

Percy opened his letters. His wife's eyes watched him narrowly the while. She saw him at last open Warren's letter, and a kind smile lighted up his face while he perused it. He breathed a sigh, and read it again and again. She heard him say distinctly to himself—"thank heaven!"

"There appears to be nothing for you, Mary, by to-day's post," said Percy.

"I did not expect anything," she replied.

"Then you little know what impatient fellows we Calendars are. Does she, Jenny?" said Percy.

"I must leave this to-morrow night," said Percy, after a pause, "and I hope you will all follow me before the end of the week. Jenny, you had better remain and come with your sisters—I will see that everything is ready for your reception."

It was midnight, and the inmates of the cottage were all asleep—except Mrs. Percy, who was unable to rest, or close her eyelids. There was a profound stillness in the dwelling, which seemed increased by the occasional chirping of a cricket, and the distant and indistinctly-heard howling of a dog baying the moon. A thousand things were floating through Mrs. Percy's brain in rapid succession. Her hus-

band's manners seemed even kinder than ever to herself, her sisters, and her brothers, since he had read that letter, which she knew George Warren had written to him. And yet she was not satisfied. In cases of difficulty, she had observed that Percy was always the most collected, and she had seen him feign to be pleased when he was really extremely vexed. Nor could she understand why he should wish to go alone to London. A violent curiosity came over her, and she longed to read what George Warren had said to her husband. She dared not ask Percy to show her the letter, and she felt that she had no right to peruse its contents without his permission. But she could not resist; and she constructed for herself a right to read whatever epistles he might receive.

Jenny seized the little lamp, and softly stole down stairs. Percy had placed the letters in a vase which stood on the sideboard, and her hands were soon upon them. She selected George Warren's epistle, and, with a shudder, she opened it. She was glad to find that its tone was peaceful; but the strange style of writing, and the wording, alarmed her. What "screwed" meant, she knew not. "Can it be," she whispered, "that he is ill, and does not expect to survive?" Then she wondered what were the lines he alluded to. She looked round the room in fear—as though she wished to satisfy herself that no eye was upon her—and she pressed George Warren's letter, several times, to her lips; and when she placed it in the vase again, she breathed a blessing on the writer.

When Jenny was returning to her room, she became alarmed. The staircase creaked, and she fancied she saw her father's face upon the wall. She called up all her courage, and, with difficulty, she regained the room without a scream. Her father had longed to see her before he died; and her sisters had told her so. Conscious that cherishing an affection for Warren was a sinful weakness; and fearful that her father's eyes were looking into her heart, and reproaching her, she became terrified and agitated. While she was in this state a cat passed her, bounded into the room, followed by one of the terriers. She shrieked and awoke Percy. The dog caught the cat and worried it to death in a few moments. The cries of the poor animal were like those of a human

being, piteously calling for help; and they struck with a peculiar horror on the ear of Mrs. Percy.

Mrs. Percy could not sleep. She sat in a large arm-chair and wrapt herself in a cloak. Percy sat beside her, and talked incessantly till daylight. He dwelt principally on the arrangements he had made respecting the boys, who were to go to school; and the prospect of Mary marrying Dr. Knolle. "What an odd thing it would be," remarked Percy, "if George Warren, after all, were to marry Charlotte?"

Mrs. Percy made no reply, but she was horror-struck with the very idea.

"I'll tell you what it is, Jenny," continued Percy, "there is nothing more likely. He and Knolle are very great friends, and if he see Charlotte often—be it at Knolle's house, or at our own—mark my words, dearest, he will propose to her. I know George Warren so well. You know that George Warren has returned?"

"Yes, I saw him at Mrs. Colderton's," she replied.

"Is he much altered in appearance?" Percy inquired.

"Yes, he looks much older, at least several years older."

"Does he look older than Knolle?"

"I think he does, Jack."

"Then, I suspect I have worn better than either of them," observed Percy. "Knolle, I am told, is much too fond of the bottle now-a-days; and I have reason to believe that George Warren is not over abstemious. But these are defects which, in a young man, matrimony almost invariably cures. Formerly, I used to indulge more than either of them, Jenny, dear."

* * * * *

CHAPTER XII.

Mrs. SHANDUS, having heard on the previous evening that Mrs. Percy was poorly, and unable to walk over, called early in the day to see her. Percy had gone with the boys to drag a pond which was said to be full of fish, and Mrs. Percy expressed a wish to return with Mrs. Shandus. Mrs. Shandus was only too happy to gratify her, and they drove off together. Jenny sought an opportunity, and went alone to the library. She seized the catalogue, and turned to the letter of "L—," and saw the name "Lamb, Charles, No. 427." She searched the index, and found the "Lines to a Friend on his Marriage," page 40. She perused them, and coloured when she read the praises which George Warren had bestowed upon her. She read the pages a second time, and restored the volume to its place. She strolled about the room for a quarter of an hour, and then returned to the drawing-room.

Percy returned to London alone. It was about five o'clock in the evening when he entered his own house. There were several letters of business on his table, but he was not disposed to open any of them. It was the first time, since he was married, that he was by himself. He was anxious to see Knolle, and not at all unwilling to meet George Warren. He was driven to Cork-street.

Knolle and Warren were about to dine, when Percy sent up his card to the Doctor; who came down, and had a long chat with him, in the patients' room. When this was concluded, Knolle said, "George Warren is up stairs, Jack. Come along, and dine. By Jove, we'll have a night of it."

"Lead the way!" said Percy. When Percy got into the room, he walked towards George Warren, who was seated on a sofa, reading some letters just received from India, holding out his hand as he went along. Warren got up and shook Percy's hand heartily; but whether the shake was a cordial one or not, is left to the reader's imagination. There was a silence—an awkward silence—which Knolle endeavoured to dissipate by calling out to his servants to "tie up

the knocker"—a very favourite phrase of his since Warren had taken up his abode in Cork-street.

They sat down to dinner, and after the first glass of wine, the three men harmonised much better. Percy told a capital story about a conversation which he had held with a Quaker that morning in the coach. Warren was convulsed with laughter, and Knolle was in hysterics, while the footman was forced to repair to the sideboard, in order that he might giggle unobserved.

The conversation soon became as general and as lively as it used to be in former days, when they were as brothers. All lately-engendered animosity seem to have subsided, and perfect good fellowship to prevail. They talked over their trip to Munich, to Vienna, and to Paris; and George Warren reminded Jack Percy of many a serious scrape from which he had extricated him; for Percy was the most thoughtless, the most violent, and by far the most excitable of "the three Calendarers."

At about one o'clock, Knolle ordered grilled bones; but Percy would not stay to partake of them. He had taken much more wine than was his wont, and he felt very tired and sleepy. He bade his friends good night, but made them promise that they would dine with him on the following evening. He told them he was a bachelor for the next week to come.

Warren was about to dwell on a host of military grievances, and he intended to instance the being ordered off to India on a very short notice, and the unhappy result. But an unusual thundering was heard at the door, and Knolle said "Hush!"

"Is Dr. Knolle at home?" imperatively demanded a stentorian voice.

"No, sir!" said the footman.

"Have you any idea where he is to be found?"

"He has gone to Norwood, sir."

"Well said," whispered Knolle.

Warren tittered; but the Doctor frowned at him and seemed so serious that Warren checked himself and looked as grave as possible, while he listened again.

The visitor paced the hall. Evidently he was a good deal disappointed.

"If you will write your name on the slate, sir," said the

footman, "I will show it to the Doctor the moment he comes in."

"Are you *sure* the Doctor is out?" said the stranger.

"Quite sure, sir," said the servant.

"Because I smell the smoke of a cheroot," said the stranger anxiously.

"Captain Warren, who is residing here, has had some friends to dinner," said the footman; "but I assure you the Doctor is at Norwood, sir."

"*What* Captain Warren?"

"I don't know *what* Captain Warren, sir," said the footman; "but there is a gentleman of that name in the house. He has not long ago come back from the Indies."

"I know that voice," whispered Warren; and he crept to the door.

"Then go down, George, like a darling!" said Knolle, "and stick to Norwood, whatever you do."

"Just tell Captain Warren that Major Grove would be very happy to speak to him," said the stranger.

When Warren heard the name he ran down stairs immediately.

Major Grove was too much excited to greet Warren warmly; but he begged of him to aid him in procuring some skilful person for his child, as quickly as possible. "We are staying at the Burlington here," said Major Grove, "a few doors off. Little Tooney has become suddenly ill, and we fear he is dying. They tell us this Dr. Knolle is a very able man; but his servant says he is at Norwood. *Do* assist me, my dear Warren. I shall go mad!"

Major and Mrs. Grove had been passengers with Warren in the *Lord Rodney*, and Warren had a great liking for both of them, as well as for the child who was represented to be so ill.

"Knolle shall be with you in a few minutes," said Warren. "He was up all last night, and is much exhausted, and therefore the orders were that he was 'out.' But I will arouse him. Don't alarm yourself, Grove; go back to the Burlington as fast as you can. Knolle shall be there in a few minutes."

Knolle overheard every word that passed below, and to please George Warren he did not lose one moment. They

walked together to the Burlington, and Warren remained in the public room while the Doctor was up stairs. He stayed a long time, at least half an hour.

"The child is very ill," said Knolle, "but it will be better in a few hours. I have told Major Grove that I shall be ready to see it at any hour, if the slightest change for the worse appear. She is rather a nice person—that Mrs. Grove."

"She is one of the best creatures in the world!" cried Warren, "and one of my best friends! I'd do anything to serve her."

"I'll wager you £100," said Knolle, "that she is a relation of Mrs. Shandus."

"Why do you think that?" asked Warren.

"Because they are not only alike in face, and in person generally, but because the voice and manner are so much alike."

Mrs. Shandus was the aunt of Mrs. Grove, who had married her husband contrary to the wishes of her family, and had been in India for some eight or nine years.

"The three Calendars" met again under Percy's roof. A very faithful likeness of Mrs. Percy, which was suspended over the fire-place in the drawing-room, gave George Warren some uneasiness, and brought out a sigh or two, when Jack was not looking; and some worsted work in the shape of a fire-screen, which he guessed had been worked by Jenny's hand, attracted his eyes several times. But Warren had made up his mind to forget her, and he repressed, to the utmost of his power, all recollection of Jenny. So steadfast, indeed, was Warren in his resolves that he determined he would not see Mrs. Percy again, and a few days after he had dined with her husband he went down to Cornwall.

The very day that George Warren left London, Mrs. Percy and her sister arrived. They were surprised to hear Percy talk so much about George Warren, and Jenny could scarcely believe him when he said George had been in their house.

Knolle paid his addresses to Mary Dale and very soon proposed. He was accepted, and they were wedded.

"Well Frank, how do you like matrimony?" asked Percy of Knolle one evening, when Knolle and his wife came to dine quietly with the Percys,—about five weeks after the Doctor's marriage, and when the sisters had gone up stairs.

"I don't mind it much," said the Doctor; "but I have a very great dislike to what my wife calls '*system*.' It wears me out."

"What's that?" said Percy, with a subdued laugh.

"Why, sir, she takes an account of every — bottle of wine that's drank in the house, and I am constantly brought to this confounded book, with regard to claret."

"One's servants rob us so," said Percy, "and these accounts, my dear Knolle, are very requisite."

"But I cannot stand being interrogated as to whether I finished this, or left that. The fact is, I never take any note. I suppose I shall get used to it," added Knolle with a sigh, and he filled his glass again.

"Economy in a wife is no fault," said Percy, half in jest and half in earnest. "Jenny understands the principle, but she does not understand the practice."

"What a blessing!" cried Knolle, "Does she interfere with your professional labours?"

"How do you mean?" asked Percy.

"Does she make you write down the names of all the people you give advice to, and then call upon you to put a ~~p~~ [he marked it on the table], against the names of those who have not paid their fees?"

"Our professions are differently regulated in that respect," said Percy. "But depend upon it Mary is right."

"But I've a worse grievance than anything of that sort," said Knolle.

"What's that?"

"Let's have a cheroot."

"Not here," said Percy. "Jenny dislikes it. The smoke clings to the curtains. If you like, I'll shut the door, and open the window, and you may puff into the street."

"What a hen-pecked wretch you must be!" exclaimed Knolle. "You used to smoke continually."

"I know I did," replied Percy; "but it was a selfish habit, and as Jenny did not like it, I gave it up. I have not smoked a cheroot for an age."

"I did not smoke a cheroot," quoth Knolle, "for a fortnight after my marriage, and I became perfectly wretched. But how do you think I managed to take to it again?"

"I can't think," said Percy.

"I know you won't tell, Jack," said Knolle. "One morning, I went up stairs, and I said—Mary, we must part for a short time. She looked at me, and inquired, 'Why?' 'Because,' said I, 'I have three or four very bad cases of smallpox, and I fear the infection may be brought into the house. There is a house opposite which I can rent for you for seven guineas a-week.' She stared at me, and said, 'Can you not refuse such cases?' I said, 'No. But if you could overcome your repugnance to tobacco, there would be no occasion for our going to the additional expense for house rent.' She yielded instanter."

Percy laughed loudly, and Knolle rose, opened the window, drew from his pocket a cheroot-case, lighted one, and puffed the smoke into the street.

"But you have not told me the great grievance," said Percy, laying his hand on the Doctor's back.

"The great grievance is this," said Knolle. "I had a man, sir, who invented professional lies so beautifully, it was a pleasure to listen to him. He was a man of *genius*—of wonderful originality—an artist, in fact. Ask George Warren about him. Well, this man Mary insisted on my discharging, and in his stead she has hired a page, with a face like a female bull-frog; and this page would no more dare to deny me when I was at home, than he'd suffer me to cut his thumb off with a pair of scissors. The consequence is, that I am regularly run off my legs. I am turned out at all hours of the day, and sometimes at all hours of the night. I shall not be able to stand it much longer," concluded Knolle.

Percy sat himself down on a chair, and screamed with laughter.

Warren soon grew weary of Cornwall, and after a few months returned to London. The regiment he then belonged to was at Canterbury, and he proceeded to join it; but of that place he also grew tired, and therefore obtained leave. He called one morning on the Knolles, and saw them both. The Doctor offered him a room, and he would have accepted the offer, but for the unmistakable look which the lady gave

her husband. Mrs. Knolle found her Frank in debt, and she was cutting and clipping in every direction to extricate him. When Warren left the Knolles, he called on Mrs. Grove. The Major had come in for a very decent fortune, and had taken a house in Park-lane, where he entertained with Indian liberality. Mrs. Grove was very glad to see Warren, and she begged that while he stayed in town he would visit them as often as he could. They talked over the dangers they had passed through, and discoursed so long on Indian topics and Indian friends, that the morning was sped before they were aware of it. The Major had gone to Windsor to make one of eleven in a cricket-match, and Mrs. Grove was all alone. She asked George to stay "tiffin" (the word luncheon she could never bring herself to pronounce), and Warren was only too happy; for a more lively and agreeable person than Mrs. Grove was very rarely to be met with.

It was nearly three o'clock, and a carriage was drawn up at the door. It was the equipage of Mrs. Shandus, who had been making a round of calls, and who, on her way home, had stopped to have a chat with her niece. Mr. Warren was introduced to Mrs. Shandus, and it pleased him to assume the gayest and most fascinating manner he could command. Mrs. Shandus liked George's address, and was glad that she had met one whom she heard so much of, and whom she had long been curious to see. She remained longer than she intended, and took off her bonnet, in the hope that Warren would soon go, when she might interrogate Mrs. Grove on a variety of questions respecting him; but she was disappointed; for, just before she entered the room, Mrs. Grove had whispered to Warren: "Sit her out. I want to talk to you."

"That is an aunt of mine," said Mrs. Grove, when Mrs. Shandus took her departure, "what do you think of her?"

"She seems a very agreeable person," replied Warren, "but I have reason to hate her."

"What do you know of her?"

"She made me very miserable. She was the cause of a girl, who was engaged to me, marrying another man."

"Surely you are mistaken?"

"I am not, indeed. They are Warwickshire people. I had very little idea, on board ship, that you were related to them."

"What was the lady's name? Do tell me. I am anxious to know; was she pretty, engaging, and all that, eh? Don't keep me in suspense. You know I cannot endure it. Tell me. It can be no secret. It does not appear to have broken your heart, at any rate."

Warren sighed and said, "It is all over now. I would rather not revert to it. Pray do not say anything about it to Mrs. Shandus, or to any one else."

"But you must revert to it," said Mrs. Grove; "I am determined you shall tell me. If you don't, I will find out by other means. What was her name?"

"Do you remember the song I wrote for you when we were becalmed on the line?"

"Of course I do—'Jenny Dale.' But, you deceitful man, you said the name was only fancy, and that it was chosen merely to make the rhymes easy. And certainly, Mr. Warren, when you wrote that song for me you did not appear to be devoted to *Jenny Dale*, or any other person upon dry land. Well, it only proves the truth of what I have always remarked—that all men are made up of insincerity. If I had known that there was such a person as Jenny Dale, instead of asking the Major to set it to music, I would have torn it up, and scattered it to the winds. But tell me *who* was Jenny Dale? And who may be her husband? And how did my aunt manage it?"

Mrs. Grove was so importunate, that Warren was forced to confide to her all the particulars of his engagement, and how it was broken off.

"And do you love her still?" asked Mrs. Grove.

"She was my first love, and I cannot forget her," he replied.

"And do you think she cares about you?"

"I know I was her first love," returned Warren. "Whether she care anything about me now, or not, you ought to be the best judge. A man, you know, Mrs. Grove, can love to devotion any pretty woman who has a tender regard for him."

"Is that really the case?"

"I think so. No generous hearted man can help it."
 "You take it very philosophically," said Mrs. Grove.
 "Whom did she marry?"

"A Mr. Percy, an old friend of mine. I wish her no harm, but every happiness, and I rejoice she has so good a husband."

"What an amiable, Platonic creature you are!" exclaimed Mrs. Grove. "How I should like to see you all in one small room, or in one post-chaise!"

"I have met her, and I have met him, since my return," said Warren. "But all three have not met."

Mrs. Grove changed the theme, and engaged Warren's attention till past five o'clock. He promised that he would call the next day to see the Major, and have a talk with him.

Percy was rising slowly, but steadily, into notice and good repute, and his wife saw nothing of him from nine in the morning till seven or eight in the evening, when he came home so tired that he often fell asleep before the cloth was removed from the dinner-table. In common with every lawyer of sound talent and application, he felt that he was a candidate for the highest honours and dignities; and being of a very ambitious turn of mind, the chances of gaining one of these coronetted prizes, clothed with glorious emolument, frequently crossed his brain, and absorbed his thought. He had banished every jealous feeling for Warren, and was at perfect peace with all mankind. The Knolles sometimes dined with the Percys, and the Percys sometimes dined with the Knolles; but there was not much cordiality between the married couples, and they got into different "sets;" for Mrs. Knolle was more generally admired than Mrs. Percy, and this created a petty feeling of soreness between the sisters, which neither the one husband nor the other could remove.

* * * * *

One morning, Mrs. Percy asked her husband to make a holiday and take her to Exeter Hall, where was to be performed an Oratorio for the benefit of some charitable institution. Percy told her it was impossible, as Easter week was very near at hand, and his work was, therefore, the more severe: but he proposed calling on the Knolles, on his way to Chambers, and coaxing Mary to allow the Doctor to escort herself and her sisters. Mrs. Knolle at first objected, and

assigned as her reason that going to these places always made Frank frivolous and volatile; but at length she yielded to Percy's repeated request, and agreed to call for Jenny and Charlotte.

Knolle was the very opposite to Percy in professional matters. Instead of attending to, he was always delighted to evade them. When Percy left the house, Mrs. Knolle sent for her husband, who was below, seeing in-door patients, and she said to him:—"Frank, if you could conveniently go your rounds after two o'clock, and be back at half-past five, I should like to go to an oratorio to-day."

As they were coming from Exeter Hall, they met Mr. and Mrs. Shandus, and Major and Mrs. Grove. The last named lady was much struck with the beautiful faces of Mrs. Percy and Mrs. Knolle. Mrs. Grove was a pretty woman herself, and was extremely fond of admiration; but she could not help gazing on the two sisters without feelings of envy, mingled with delight.

"If you are not engaged, Mary," said Mrs. Shandus, "you had better come over and dine with us this evening; and you, Jennette, will come too, and bring Charlotte. Tell Mr. Percy I will never speak to him again, if he does not come."

CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. GROVE did not tell Mrs. Shandus that she was aware of the engagement of Jennette Dale to Warren. She feigned to know nothing of the family of Dales, and she merely spoke of Warren as "a fellow-passenger" who had always been very kind to the child, and who was a favourite of hers and the Major's, *in consequence*. Mrs. Grove was a mischievous little being; and when she heard the Percys and the Knolles invited, she put up, with other books which she intended to take to her aunt's, the one which contained

“Jenny Dale,” and another effusion, written by Warren, and set to music by the Major.

After a great deal of scientific flute playing by Major Grove, and “great execution” on the piano-forte by Mrs. Shandus and her niece, Mr. Shandus, wanted something simple, and Mrs. Grove opened her book of Miscellaneous Songs; and while Mrs. Percy stood beside her and turned over the leaves, she sang:—

JENNY DALE,
THE WORDS BY
GEORGE WARREN.
COMPOSED BY
HENRY GROVE.

Mrs. Grove sung the song with all the effect and feeling of which her clever little self was capable.

Mrs. Knolle looked at Charlotte, and Charlotte looked at Mrs. Shandus, and Mrs. Shandus looked at Mrs. Percy, and saw a large tear standing in each eye, while she heard the heaving of a breast which was pained with the fervour of a slumbering affection, too easily awakened.

“There is a good joke about that song,” said the Major, confidentially, to Mr. Shandus. “It was written by a young officer, named Warren, who thought proper to fall desperately in love with my wife, on the passage home from India. Of course, we laughed heartily. Don’t you see to whom it is written? ‘Jenny’ is for ‘Jane’—and ‘Dale’ is for ‘Grove.’”

Mr. Shandus could not help laughing in Major Grove’s face, although the song made him in no laughing humour.

Mrs. Percy admired Mrs. Grove’s singing, and bestowed so many praises upon it, that Mrs. Grove called upon Mrs. Percy the next day, and ripened the acquaintance formed on the previous evening. Mrs. Percy, however, somewhat distrusted her; for she could not understand what she meant, when she said George Warren was “an old flirt” of hers, and that he was “such a dear man.”

In a few days Mrs. Percy returned Mrs. Grove’s call, and there she met George Warren, who seemed “quite at home.” He kissed Mrs. Grove’s children so fondly, and talked to their mamma so familiarly, and he was so distant and

reserved towards herself, that Mrs. Percy hardly knew what to make of him; and she began to think that Mrs. Shandis had not misrepresented him when she said he was wild and roving, and would never make a good husband. Nor was she so much pleased with his appearance as she used to be. His eyes were sunken, and his cheeks evidently rouged to hide the effects of late hours.

Warren saw Mrs. Percy to her carriage. Just as the coachman was about to drive off, and Jenny was about to withdraw her hand from that of Warren, she said, "I thought you were going to the Cape of Good Hope."

"So I was," he replied; "but the Groves here won't let me, and what can I do? I will do myself the pleasure of calling upon you to-morrow. Remember me affectionately to Percy."

Mrs. Percy ordered the coachman to drive to Lincoln's Inn, and, for the first time in her life, she walked into her husband's chambers. Percy was astounded to see her there, and inquired, playfully, how she could make so bold. She replied that he was wearing himself to death, and that she was determined to take him home that day. He was not pleased at being disturbed, but he feigned to be delighted at this ebullition on his wife's part; and he threw down his pen, and went home with her immediately.

"Were you not enraptured," said Mrs. Grove to Warren, when he returned into the room. "She is really a very pretty woman!"

"I used to be," said he, "but I am volatile, you know, and fickle; and when I see those who are more beautiful, more clever, and more interesting"—(he stopped short.)

"Well, go on," said Mrs. Grove, "finish your sentence."

"I hardly know what I am saying," he replied. "Have you many people to-morrow night?"

"No, only a few—and Mrs. Percy is not of the number. Had I thought of it, I would have asked them?"

"Why do you tell me that so pointedly?"

"Because I thought you would like to meet her."

"I wish I could be offended with you."

"Now tell me the truth. Do you not like her better than any other being in the world?"

Warren looked at Mrs. Grove, but he made no reply. He pretended to be indignant at the idea of her asking such a question.

"I can tell you this," said Mrs. Grove, "she cares very little about you now, whatever she may have cared formerly."

"I am very glad to hear it; but tell me what induces you to come to the conclusion."

"I sang the song you wrote for me—Jenny Dale—a few evenings ago, in her presence, and I watched her countenance narrowly."

"Well?"

"She tittered with her sisters!"

Warren was annoyed. "I hope," said he, "that Percy was not present?"

"No, he was not. Why?"

"Because I would not wound his feelings for the world; and that song might do so."

CHAPTER XIV.

In fulfilment of his promise, Warren called on Mrs. Percy. She was not alone. Both her sisters were with her. When he was about to take leave, Mrs. Percy said, "Are you engaged this evening, Mr. Warren?"

"I have no engagement this evening," he replied, looking at her pretty little mouth.

"Will you dine with us? My spouse very rarely goes out; but this evening he has promised to accompany us to the Opera. He will be delighted if you will join our party."

These words would not have seared Warren's heart; but the manner in which they were spoken, almost tempted him to betray how severely he was hurt on the occasion.

"When you speak of the Opera," said he, calmly, "reminds me that I am engaged this evening to dine with the Groves. The Major is not equal to late hours, and he has asked me to take care of his wife, who is anxious to see this new piece."

"I wonder he did not ask Mrs. Shandus, to take care of her," said Charlotte Dale.

"That may be," said Warren; "but the Major, who is a man of keen perception, prefers placing her under my care. He knows my value as a chaperon."

CHAPTER XV.

THE performance at the opera had commenced. Mr. Shandus, Knolle, and Percy, and their wives, were seated in the same box.

"There's Jane!" said Mrs. Shandus.

"Where?" said her husband.

"Just opposite to us, a little to the right."

"Who is that talking to Jane?"

"George Warren," said Percy.

Mrs. Percy smiled with the lower part of her face, but her large dark eyes drooped sorrowfully as she fixed them on the foot-lights. She did not speak. She experienced a suffocating sensation in the upper part of her throat, which prevented even the utterance of the forced laugh she longed to give.

The curtain was again drawn up for the second act; but Mrs. Percy could not take her eyes off George Warren and Mrs. Grove. There they sat—gazing at, and whispering to, each other, while every one else was drinking in the notes of "the Queen of Song."

The curtain dropped a second time, and Dr. Knolle was on the point of dropping off to sleep, when Mr. Shandus said with indignation, "Really! Major Grove is the most unqualified fool that ever breathed."

Mrs. Percy now tried to hate and detest Warren; but a *strange fluttering* about the heart engendered another feeling.

Mr. and Mrs. Shandus were provoked beyond measure that their niece should flirt as she did, and so openly; and Charlotte Dale took an opportunity of observing to her sister, Mrs. Percy, that since Mr. Warren paid so much attention to another man's wife she wondered what he'd do if he had a wife of his own?"

Mr. Shandus once or twice intended to go over to Major Grove's box and break off the incessant head to head conversation which was kept up by Warren and Mrs. Grove; but his wife kept him by her side, and promised she would read the lady a lecture in private.

The opera was over, and the ballet had began. George Warren and Mrs. Grove took no heed of it. As the evening's amusement was drawing to a close, in fact, they seemed to talk with more *impressement*.

The smoke from the lamps somewhat impeded her vision, or Mrs. Percy would have observed that whenever Warren laughed, or moved his head, he stole a look at her; and although when the ballet was over, and he wrapped Mrs. Grove's shawl about her, in the most household way, and offered her his arm, his eyes were following her footsteps.

"They have all gone!" said Mrs. Grove. "The Major will be wondering what has become of me."

CHAPTER XVI.

CHARLOTTE DALE became more authoritative in the house of Mrs. Percy than was pleasing, and before many weeks had passed the sisters clashed. This led to a family difference, which ended in Charlotte Dale taking up her abode with the Knolles.

Now that she was left to herself, Mrs. Percy became wretched. She disliked reading, for in books she often found passages that made her very uncomfortable and dissatisfied. Percy was too deeply engaged in professional pursuits to give her much of his attention. He allowed her to do what she pleased, to go where she thought proper, to regard her resources as unlimited, and to amuse herself as she best could; but he was so completely taken up with himself and his future prospects, that he rarely or never questioned her, or took any interest in her proceedings. He did not love her one atom the less, but revelling in the thought of his security, and the consciousness of her love for him, he allowed his mind to divert itself into another direction, where its energies were exercised as much for his wife's sake as for his own.

Warren was no longer invited by the wives of his old friends, and they saw as little of Mrs. Grove as possible, for she continued to flirt with Warren, and thereby forfeited the good opinion of her own aunt.

A year had passed since Warren had returned from India, and he received another invite to Mrs. Colderton's annual ball. On the evening that it came off, he dined with the Groves, and went with them.

The Percys were there also; for Mrs. Colderton had a cousin—an influential attorney—who was very civil to Percy.

The evening was considerably advanced, and Percy strolled into the refreshment room, where he saw Warren

drinking champagne with a middle-aged gentleman of awkward figure. Percy touched Warren on the shoulder, and said—"George, how are you?" Warren greeted him heartily, and filled a glass for him. They drank together, and the middle-aged gentleman walked away, and left them alone.

"Let us go into the air, and have a chat," said Percy, slipping his arm through Warren's.

"What have you been doing with yourself?" asked Percy. "We never see anything of you."

"To tell you the truth, Jack," replied Warren, "I have been knocking about town. I need not tell you anything further."

"Your friend Grove seems a capital sort of fellow," remarked Percy, with a laugh.

"A paragon of a man! isn't he?" said Warren, with the sister laugh to Percy's.

"He reminds me a good deal of my Frankfort friend," continued Percy. "Do you remember him?"

"Of course I do," said Warren. "Yes, he's exactly that easy, kind, good-natured, excellent, inestimable man——"

"Whom we used to appreciate," suggested Percy.

"That's the word, sir," said Warren, and they laughed again.

"*She* seems a nice body, rather," said Percy.

"Very much so," conceded Warren; "but weak, and *vain*. I never knew a woman who had one tithe of her vanity."

A gentleman who was sitting, unobserved, near to where Warren and Percy held their dialogue, rose from his chair, gave a gruff "hem," and walked rather pompously into the dining-room.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Warren, "that is Grove himself, and by the 'hem' and that strut, I'd wager my life he heard all we said?"

"Not he," said Percy.

"I know the man so well," said Warren. "How dreadfully provoking! I would not have had it happen for a thousand pounds!"

After another glass of champagne, they walked into the room to look at the waltzing.

"There can be no doubt about Grove having heard what I said," said Warren, "for look, he is rowing her. Whenever I see a husband talk to his wife in that serious manner in public, I always conclude he is not whispering *sweet* words into her ear. You have had some experience, Percy; what do you say?"

"You are right, George; but in this case you are wrong. Perhaps he thinks she has danced too much."

"Well, the old coolness must determine the point," said Warren, and he walked across the room and confronted the Major. "I wish to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Percy," said he.

"At any other time I shall be happy to make Mr. Percy's acquaintance," replied Major Grove; "but at present we are about to go home."

"Impossible!" cried Warren, looking at Mrs. Grove. "Why you are engaged to dance with me, and surely you are not going to disappoint me, in that way?"

"I feel tired," said Mrs. Grove, with a grave face. The Major led her out of the room. Warren followed and offered an arm, which the lady accepted, but she leaned very lightly upon it. Warren was about to hand Mrs. Grove into the carriage, but her husband relieved him of that duty, and springing into the vehicle as quickly as he could, he called to Warren "good night," and then to the coachman, "all right," in a way which very plainly indicated that something was all wrong.

When Warren returned to the room he found Percy seated beside his wife, and laughing with her. He guessed what they were laughing at, and approached them.

"Your husband has got me into a pretty scrape," said Warren to Mrs. Percy. "I shall be shot to a certainty. Major Grove is an awful fire-eater, and he'll have me out as sure as I am alive."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Percy. "What have you done, Jack?"

"Nothing in the world!" he replied. "It is all our friend's imagination."

"The facts are simply these," said Warren. "Major Grove overheard me express an opinion of himself and his

wife, which was very different to the one which both of them thought I entertained, and he is naturally affronted."

Percy left Warren and his wife, and went to talk to Mrs. Colderton.

"It is an age since we danced together," said Warren. "Let us dance now."

Jenny took his arm and stood up.

"This is the *first* time," said Mrs. Percy, "that we *ever* danced together."

"I declare you are right," replied Warren, "and the chances are it will be the last; for the Major fires very straight, and I am almost certain he will call me out."

"Surely you would not fight for such a thing as that," said Mrs. Percy, alarmed.

"I have seen Percy fired at twice, for just such an act," said Warren—"namely, expressing opinions too unguardedly. But it does not matter; it can't be helped."

"But you know that you were very fond of Mrs. Grove, and they must have been fond of you, for you told me one day that they would not let you go to the Cape of Good Hope; and do you know that when we went to see Norma, Mrs. Shandus was quite annoyed at the attention you paid her niece."

"She might have spared herself the feeling," replied Warren, with a half smile and a half sneer. "In honest truth, I care as much for the aunt as for the niece, and for the former I have no reason, Heaven knows, to cherish any very great affection. I was anxious to annoy others and amuse myself, and I was savage enough to be glad when I saw my object was accomplished."

Mrs. Percy looked at him while he spoke; but her powers of conversation failed her. She replied very briefly to his observations; but she could do no more.

Having got rid of Mrs. Colderton, Percy joined his wife, and by a look reminded her of the hour.

"Come and dine with us, George, to-morrow evening," said Percy.

"To-morrow evening?" echoed Warren. "I am engaged to dine with the Groves; but I won't go. I'll dine with you with the greatest of pleasure, provided I have not a prior

engagement in the morning, and if I have I will not fail to let you know."

Percy nodded, said "Very well," and led his wife away. Warren watched them till they were out of sight, kissed his hand towards the carriage that bore them away, and walked the whole way to his lodgings, talking to himself in a frame of mind which it would be rather difficult to describe.

Mrs. Percy had asked her husband if he thought there was any chance of a quarrel; "*because it would be so distressing to Mrs. Shandus.*"

Percy had replied "that it all depended on the style of man Major Grove was."

This was so vague that poor Mrs. Percy could not sleep. She had heard Percy say to his servant, "If any gentleman call here, or any letter be sent here, let me be aroused immediately," and she listened to hear if the knocker were struck, until she was so weary she could listen no longer; and then she fell into a deep but disturbed slumber, in which she dreamt of most hideous matters, comprising earthquakes, deluges, rivers of blood, roaring seas, and winds that blew the very rocks into the air, assassins, daggers, pistols, houses on fire and no hope of escape, and through all these horrors she dreamt it was her lot to pass, and alone too, for no one was near her whom she knew.

"What time did your master leave the house?" inquired Mrs. Percy of a servant, on coming down stairs the morning after the ball.

"At a quarter to ten, ma'am.

"Did he go to chambers?"

"Yes, ma'am. He said if any letters came, they were to be sent there immediately."

"And have you sent any letters there?"

"Yes, ma'am; one letter, which was brought by a gentleman's servant.

Mrs. Percy was frightened, and she went up into her husband's dressing-room to see if he had taken his pistol case with him. She could not find it.

She tried to write to Percy to beg of him not to have anything to do with such an affair, and to prevent it, were it possible to be prevented; and she had nearly finished the scrawl, when a loud rap was heard at the door. She expected to hear of nothing less than Warren's death, and that her husband was in jail for being a second. She became pale with anxiety, and a gentle dew was standing on her white forehead, when Warren, for it was he, entered the room and shook her hand warmly.

"I am so glad to see you!" she exclaimed involuntarily. "I feared you had been foolish enough to fight a duel with Major Grove, and that Mr. Percy had been mad enough to encourage the quarrel."

"I am delighted to say that I think I am quite safe," said Warren, "and I shall have the happiness of dining with you this evening."

Mrs. Percy felt very awkward when she found herself alone with Warren; and, much as she had longed to see him, she would then have been glad had he taken his departure. She feared that he would revert to former days, and that he might reproach her; and when she saw him looking at her wedding-ring, she blushed till her cheeks became almost as crimson as the curtains. Warren saw her confusion, and guessed what was passing in her mind. He was half disposed to tease her; but a single reflection, that lifted his heart to its old love for her, stayed the words that were upon his tongue, and he talked of the disagreeable accident of the past night, when Major Grove overheard his conversation with Percy.

"It proves to you the danger of doing such things," said the lady.

"Doing what?"

"Making yourself conspicuous in public."

"What do you allude to?"

"The other night at the opera. Mrs. Shandus was quite vexed."

"I meant nothing, I assure you. Mrs. Grove was very

silly, and I brought myself down to her own level. However, there are great allowances to be made for me."

Warren stayed about an hour, and then went to his lodgings. That day appeared the longest he had ever seen. It seemed as though the evening when he was to meet Mrs. Percy again would never arrive. Once more he took from his desk the numerous letters he had received from "Jenny Dale," and he read them over and over again until it was time to dress for dinner.

"While I remain here, I must see her," said Warren to himself, on the morning after he had dined with the Percys; "and when I leave this time, I will bid a long farewell to her for ever." His eyes rested on a razor which was lying open on his dressing-table, and a broad unmeaning grin settled itself on his mouth. While he stood, still gazing on the razor, his servant came into the room and gave him a note and something wrapped up in a piece of writing-paper. He knew the hand-writing, and he broke open—but gently—the little seal, and read:—

"MY DEAR MR. WARREN,—You left your pencil-case on the dining-table last evening. I have the pleasure to send it to you. Believe me, very truly,

"JENNETTE PERCY."

The note called up a sigh, and in less than an hour Warren was in the presence of the writer. Mrs. Percy was glad he had called, and yet she wished he had stayed away.

On the following day he called, and stayed for several hours. Mrs. Percy had made up her mind, that if he called again, she would not be at home; but she had not the resolution to give such an order to the servants; and, on the third day, Warren was again by her side. Mrs. Percy had not told her husband of his visits. She did not like to do so, for fear he should be jealous.

There was now a difference in his manner which she could not understand. He looked at her in silence for several minutes, and then turned his head away. He rose several times, as though he were about to depart; but then he sat down again, and stared at the carpet. Unconscious of what

he was doing, he took up a bouquet that was on the table, and plucked it to pieces, scattering the leaves of the various flowers about the floor.

When he had completed this work, Mrs. Percy said, with a pretty smile, "Now that you have destroyed it entirely, I trust you are satisfied."

He knelt before her, and looked into her face.

"I pray you, George," she exclaimed (vehemently, but in an under tone), "do not kneel to me! For Heaven's sake, and for my sake, leave me, George. If you have the slightest regard for me, you will not delay."

"I will leave you Jenny," he said, softly. "I will leave you—never to see you again. I have struggled to kill my love for you, but I cannot. It defies me. To-morrow I will join my regiment. Let me to-day adore you, and dwell, for the remainder of the life that may be allotted to me, on the recollections of these happy moments. I will think of you, dearest, as a sacred being—as one who once lived for me, but who was taken from me by death. Weep not, dearest Jenny."

"Leave me, dear George!" she cried.

"I will leave thee," he answered: but still he continued kneeling, and grasping her little hands. She would have unlocked them had she been able, but she was not, and her tears flowed faster than ever.

"You love me still!" he cried, passionately.

She made no reply.

"Then fly with me!" he uttered. "Fly with me, dearest! Thou art mine—Jenny—my beloved Jenny! Fly with me?"

The proposal brought Mrs. Percy to her senses. While she clasped Warren's hand, and while she looked him steadily in the face, she asked him:—"Could you, George, wish me to do that which would diminish your respect for me—whatever might be your love? Would you degrade me, George, in my own esteem? Could you consent to look upon the wife of one of the worthiest men in the world as your mistress? If you could—your feeling for me is *not* love. I confess to you, with a sorrowful heart, and with a soul which feels its own sinfulness—that the love I had for you is not worn out. But if you tell me you could consent to see me as a woman

dishonoured in the eyes of her own sex, and not exalted in the eyes of yours, after you quit my presence I shall be far happier than I have been since the day I became Mr. Percy's wife."

Warren burst into tears. "God forgive me!" he ejaculated—"and do thou forgive me, thou dear pattern of virtue! I cannot love you less; but if it be possible I will love thee more. We must not meet again! yet in absence I will treasure you up, and I will claim you, dearest, in heaven—where I trust we both shall meet. There will I dispute the right to thee." He kissed her hand fervently.

"Do not linger near me!" She replied. "George! Do not linger near me! I implore thee to be gone! You must not kneel beneath this roof—and you must never again be sheltered by it."

"Do you forgive me, Jenny?"

"Yes, George—and I pity you."

Warren rose from his knees. Both shed tears—and both hearts yearned, one towards the other. It was a painful—an agonising parting—but that stern sense of duty, and that innate love of virtue, which was possessed by every daughter of Captain Dale, was far stronger than the impulse of Jenny's nature, and though she wept bitterly she rejoiced that she had withstood temptation.

When Warren left Mrs. Percy she felt faint and ill, and she wrote a note to Dr. Knolle, as well and as legibly as her grief would permit, and requested him to call upon her as early as possible. Fortunately the note was put in his hands at his own door just as he was about to go his rounds, and before he paid any other visits he drove to Percy's house. He found Jenny in tears.

He took her hand gently, and inquired what ailed her.

"I am not ill," said Jenny—"I wish to ask your advice. Apart from our connection, you have always been a friend of Mr. Percy's and of Mr. Warren's and of my own, and on *your opinion I will act.*" She then repeated to him all that

had passed, and asked him whether, or not, she should tell her husband?

Knolle was extremely indignant at Warren's conduct. He paced the room with measured steps and deliberated for some minutes.

"I think you had better not mention this to Percy," said Knolle. "Your own course of action has been most proper, and I am satisfied you are impregnable. If you tell Percy, he will avenge the wrong to a certainty. Indeed, I have hardly made up my mind whether it is not *my* duty to do so—without reference to your husband.

"I adhere to my former opinion," said Knolle, seating himself beside Jenny, for a second time. "I do not think Warren will make any further approaches, and the matter may rest where it now does."

CHAPTER XVII.

WARREN went down to Canterbury; but he could not make himself comfortable. His manner was thought odd and unsocial, and no one regretted to hear that he had further leave granted to him, and was about to travel on the Continent.

Warren was ready to start, when he met with an old friend—an officer of his old corps—who had just returned on sick certificate from India. Warren heard of his old friends, Tom Dunkington among the rest—and in an excited moment he exclaimed, “I’ll go back to the old corps, by ——!” An arrangement for an exchange was concluded on the spot; in sixteen days Warren was gazetted—and very shortly after he was on board the identical ship *Lord Rodney*, with a detachment of recruits for H. M.’s ——th Regt. of Foot, then stationed at ——, in the East Indies.

How different were the feelings under which George Warren left England a second time! He would not have cared had he been told he was never to return! It was to him a matter of perfect indifference what became of him.

One morning Percy was overtaken by a heavy shower, and before he had time to get under shelter, his clothes were wetted through. Like most men of hardy constitution, he thought nothing of this, and when the rain was over, walked on, instead of returning home. Percy became ill, and ere long, a cough was settled on his chest. His wife advised him to stay at home until he was well, and Knolle recommended a change of air. But to all such proposals Percy made the same reply, “I cannot afford it. I shall be all right again before next spring.”

Mrs. Percy was sorely distressed to see how very soon her husband was fatigued, and yet how assiduously he would apply himself to papers till a very late hour at night. And

a darkness came over his under eyelids which alarmed her, and made her again beg of him to desist, and seek a change of scene. But to no purpose.

It was Sunday evening. Percy and his wife had dined. He had walked to church with her in the morning, and the walk had greatly fatigued him. He threw himself on the sofa, and asked Jenny to read a long case to him, on which he had promised to give an opinion on the following day. She complied and began a long story which embodied some very strange circumstances; but before it was half finished poor Percy was sound asleep.

Jenny crept to his side, and gazed at his pale and haggard countenance. Had he not breathed she would have thought him dead. When she saw that mouth which was always lighted up with a happy, good-natured smile — and not only ready but anxious to tell some laughter-creating story—when she saw his nose pinched and bloodless, and the eye-balls protruding from the sockets—and a deep “denting in” around them from the shrinking of the flesh from the cheeks—her gentle heart was almost broken, and turning from the sight, she shed a flood of tears. Percy had been the kindest and most faithful of husbands to her, and a father to her orphan brothers. Jenny knew that he was in a dangerous state, and the dread of his death shook her whole frame. She wrote to Dr. Knolle expressing her alarm, and he came immediately.

Percy was still sleeping soundly, when Knolle stole into the room.

The whispering awoke Percy, and he sat up and stared at them. “Well, Knolle, what are you whispering to dear Jenny about?” he asked.

“I am making arrangements,” he replied, “to have you moved out of town to-morrow. Somewhere out of town—but near enough for me to see you every day.”

Percy laughed.

Mrs. Percy sat down and sobbed violently.

“Don’t cry, dearest,” exclaimed Percy, through a hollow cough; “Knolle ought not to talk such nonsense.”

“I maintain that it is not nonsense,” said Knolle warmly and sharply, “and I am surprised that a clever man, like you, should be such a fool as to go on working when you

have been so repeatedly told that if you do not rest awhile your labour will be brought to an abrupt end."

"I assure you," said Percy, "I am not so ill as you think I am."

"I assure you, you know nothing about it," said Knolle. "You lawyers fancy you know everything; but you don't."

Mrs. Percy kneeled to her husband and implored him to be guided by Knolle's advice.

"I will, dearest," he said to her. "Not that I think Knolle is right, but because you wish it." And he placed his hand affectionately on her head, and played with her hair.

"It matters very little to me why you give over work, Jack," observed Knolle, "so long as you do give over. There's a house to be let at Dulwich ready furnished," continued Knolle, addressing himself to Mrs. Percy, "and to-morrow morning, at ten, I'll take you out there."

"I cannot possibly go before Wednesday," said Percy.

"You go to-morrow!" said Knolle, authoritatively. "Delay is absurd, and unfair to your family."

"Dear Jack, *do* go to-worrow, I beseech you," cried his wife.

Percy agreed, reluctantly.

The next morning he was conveyed to Dulwich. He had smuggled a bundle of papers into the carriage with a view of working at them in secret, and sending them by a messenger to his office. He further wrote a note to his clerk to visit him every evening, and inform him of the progress which a friend (a very good pleader) made with some matters he had promised to attend to.

Mrs. Percy was worn out with watching her husband, and her sisters came to assist her.

One morning Knolle went earlier than usual to Dulwich. There was no one awake but his (Knolle's) wife, whose turn it was to sit by Percy's bed-side. Knolle inquired how Percy was, and was told that he seemed better; that he had slept nearly all night, and when he woke he had coughed less violently, and talked much easier than he had done for weeks.

Percy opened his eyes and said, "Ah! Frank!" and then dozed off again.

Knolle felt his pulse, and gently placed the hand (which

Percy had raised) on the bed-clothes. "Call Charlotte to sit here," he whispered to his wife. "I wish to talk to you below." Charlotte was called, and Knolle and his wife left the room.

"It is all over with poor Jack Percy!" said Knolle, in a broken voice, when he entered the breakfast parlour, and Knolle drew forth his handkerchief, walked to the window, and looked out upon the road.

"Surely not, Frank?" said Mrs. Knolle, who had never before seen her husband's eyes moistened. "He seems so much better, Frank?"

"He is sinking fast into his grave," uttered the Doctor, inarticulately. "He may see the dawning of to-morrow's light; but I do not think he can survive so long. Poor Jack Percy!" Knolle burst into a flood of tears, and his wife followed his example. "Jennette had better not see him," said Knolle. "Have some tea made immediately, and throw this powder into it, and give it to her with your own hand." He measured out from a phial, which he took from the medicine chest, a powerful opiate. This was scarcely done when Charlotte ran down stairs, and told Knolle that Percy was awake, and wished to speak to him. Knolle told her to close the curtains to exclude the light, and, brightening up, he approached the bed-side of the dying man.

"How do you feel now, Jack?" he inquired, and placed his ear close to Percy's head.

"Send them all out of the room," whispered Percy.

"There is no one here," said Knolle aloud,—and he looked round and motioned Mary and Charlotte (who were standing at the foot of the bed) to depart.

"It is all up with me, Frank!" whispered Percy. "I feel that I have not strength to cough, and I know the result will be speedy and sure."

"I don't see that," said Knolle.

"Yes, you do, Frank," he urged. "Don't try to deceive me. I want to tell you something."

"What is that, my dear Jack?" Knolle inquired soothingly.

"In my chambers, in an iron chest, you will find a will—by which I have left everything to my dear Jenny.

There will be enough for her and her brothers—if she live quietly. Poor Jenny! See to her Knolle, when I am gone.”

“I will see you again in a few hours,” said the Doctor. “You are doubtless ——,” (he faltered).

“Dying ——,” said Percy, “I know it, Frank.”

Mrs. Percy was quite unconscious of what was going on in the house. Knolle stayed there the whole day, and never left the dying man’s side.

Percy groaned, and cried “Jenny dear!”

“Jenny is asleep,” said Knolle. “She was up very late, and she is tired.”

“Don’t let Jenny be disturbed,” said Percy, “I shall be well in a day or two,” and he closed his eyes again and appeared to sleep.

A large fly buzzed about, and seemed ravenous to settle on Percy’s smooth and intelligent forehead. He started and wildly asked for his wife. Again he was told she was asleep. “Then you must *wake* her,” he cried with unnatural strength of voice. “I must *see* her!”

He sat up and looked at them closely, and observed that Jennette was not there. “Where is she?” he cried. “Oh Frank, let me see my dear Jenny once more. Hasten, Frank—hasten. Bring dear Jenny for one moment. I wish to tell her something, which I cannot tell to you or to any one else. Knolle! Knolle! Where is Jenny?”

It were as useless to attempt to wake the dead as to attempt to wake Mrs. Percy. Her senses were deeply drugged, and she lay in a perfect stupor.

The dying man raved to see his wife; but to no purpose; and at length his head fell back upon the pillow, and was still for evermore!

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. PERCY rented from the Shanduses the little cottage where she had lived so many years as a child.

Two years passed away, and Robert Dale was now seventeen years of age. Mr. Shandus applied for a commission for him, and enclosed to the officer in whose power it was to grant such matters, the letters which Charlotte had prevented Percy destroying. The reply was, that Robert Dale should be gazetted immediately; and in less than three months the promise was kept. The corps to which he was appointed an ensign was then in India, and he proceeded to join it, on an allowance of some two hundred pounds a-year (from Dr. Knolle) in addition to his pay.

When Robert Dale landed in Calcutta, he found the regiment in the Fort, and there he had to take up his quarters.

George Warren, on joining his old regiment, was received with great warmth. Many changes were observable at the mess-table; but still very many of the old hands remained, and amongst the rest his inseparable allies, Tom Dunkington and Paddy Benson. Warren's last interview with Mrs. Percy had made an impression on his mind which was not easily erased, and whenever he thought of it, he always resorted to stimulants, and sometimes made a fool of himself. Dunkington was a man who never kept a secret if it contained anything like what he thought a joke, and the consequence was that Warren's love affair was known to everybody. Dunkington was going to England on leave, and he induced George to get a month's leave to see him off.

They arrived in Calcutta, and took rooms at an hotel, and on the first day dined at the Fort with the mess of the regiment to which young Dale belonged. After dinner they

went into the billiard-room, where a match was being played between two middle-aged men against two boys. One of the latter had got a break, and he was scoring away at a rather extraordinary rate, amidst congratulatory remarks from the bystanders, who were betting. "Well done, Bob!" "Beautiful hit!" "Keep it over the pocket, my boy!" "That's your game!" &c. &c.

The youngster played so well and so easily, that Warren could not help looking at him; and it struck him very forcibly that he knew the face, flushed as it then was, and reddish as was the hair from exposure to the sun, and the want of Macassar, on a long sea voyage. The more he looked at the youngster, the more familiar did the features become, and yet he could not call to mind where he had seen them. The game was won, and a shout of "Bravo, Dale!" "Well done, *Bobby!*" at once removed George Warren's doubts.

Warren was not recollected by Robert Dale, and he did not make himself known to him in the room. He stayed playing billiards till it was very late, and when he was about to come away he discovered that Dunkington had gone off somewhere in the buggy.

Half a dozen people offered buggies, or palquays, but Warren said he would walk. It was a fine moonlight morning, and Robert Dale said he would take a walk, too; and he accompanied George as far as the Government House Gate—when he wished Warren good night, and invited him to come to mess on the following evening.

"Since you have come so far," said Warren, "you had better come into my rooms and have a glass of grog and a cheroot. I have a hack buggy in the yard here, and you may drive it home, if you like."

Robert thanked him and accepted the offer. When they were seated, and a cloud of smoke was issuing from each of them, Warren said to Robert—"I think I have seen you before to-night."

"I am certain that I have seen *you* before," replied young Dale, "but where I cannot make out."

"My name is Warren—of the —th."

The boy looked at him and turned nearly as red as his

jacket. "You don't mean to say," said he, putting down his cheroot, "that you are the Mr. Warren who was——"

"Was what?"

"Going to be married to —— my sister."

"Yes, I am."

"How very odd we should meet!" exclaimed the boy. "What a long time ago that is—eh? I never could make out what had become of you. At one time the governor said you were dead—and then again I heard Mary and Charlotte talking about you, but they seemed to make a mystery of it. I was a youngster then, and didn't trouble my head about you much. Only fancy! Of course you know the poor old governor is dead?"

"Yes—I heard that."

"Well, and Mary married a Dr. Knolle."

"That I heard also."

"Jenny was married to Percy."

"And that I heard."

"Poor Percy!" sighed the boy. "He was a kind friend to all of us. I declare I felt as much when they told me he was dead as I did when I saw my own father laid in his grave?"

"What? Do you mean to say Jack Percy is dead?"

"It must be more than two years ago since he died," returned Robert Dale. "The fact is he killed himself by working when he was ill. There was a long notice of his death in the *Times*, written by Serjeant Somebody,—I've got the paper by me, and I'll show it to you to-morrow. They say if he had lived, he would have been I know not what all. He was such a very clever fellow in his profession."

Warren could not, for several minutes, utter a syllable. Percy had died when he was on his passage out to India, and he had never seen the overland paper which contained the news of his death.

Robert Dale was a ready, communicative youth, and he briefly told Warren all that had happened, relative to his family—where Knolle was and what he was doing—where Jennette was, and how that she was living alone—that Charlotte might have married a Captain in the Navy, but she preferred remaining single—what his brothers expected,

and how he came to get a commission—and how that he believed he had as good interest as any man in the army—all by a mere chance which he explained. Warren listened to all these things, but he little heeded any part of the information beyond what related to Jenny.

“I dare say your sister will marry again,” remarked Warren with assumed indifference.

“There is no knowing,” replied Robert. “She is young yet—and although she *is* my sister, I must say it, that even now a man must go a deuced long way before he meets with a woman anything like so handsome.”

“Depend on’t she’ll marry again.”

“She may. I’ll tell you who offered to her.”

“Who?” (This word was uttered most anxiously.)

“Sir Jasper!”

“Indeed!”

“Poor Percy had then been dead a year. It must be now better than thirteen months ago.”

“She has probably thought better of it since.”

“No! I’ll be hanged if she has—for I had a letter yesterday from her, dated seven weeks back, and she signs herself Jennette Percy. By Jove, I believe it is here.” He put his hand into his pocket and drew forth an epistle written upon black bordered paper, and addressed to “Ensign Dale, H. M. —th Regiment of Foot, Calcutta.”

“As you know all the people mentioned, you may read it at your leisure,” said Robert. “There’s nothing in it that you may not see. The first two sides is all humbug, and you may skip it. It is all about not keeping idle company—as if a fellow could be anything but idle in this country; and not to drink spirituous liquors—as if a fellow was to make a water-butt of himself, or blow himself out with that blackguard drink called “beer;” and not to gamble—as if a fellow was to tire himself by walking round a table, and throw his skill away. I make about 350 rupees a-month by my play, and that’s none so bad for an ensign, is it?”

“You play very well,” said Warren, wishing that he would go, for he wanted to read that “*dear* letter.”

“You have never seen me play,” said Robert. “I was only pocketing balls, and going in off them to-night. I

could give you forty-five out of 100, that is to say if you were not disguising your play to-night."

Warren was in agony when he saw Robert Dale light a fresh cheroot, and heard him hold forth on his monomaniac hobby, and yet Warren was delighted to look at him in his excited state. His eye was exactly like that of his sister Jennette, and his teeth were like hers, and the expression of his face and his general likeness was that of his sister.

Warren was now almost *mad* with anxiety to read the letter which young Dale had handed over to him, and seeing no other way of getting rid of him, he pretended to fall asleep, and got up a very respectable snore. He heard Robert mix more grog and mutter to himself, "I hope this fellow won't blab about my play,"—and then, having drank off his potion, he heard him call "bearer!" and depart.

CHAPTER XIX.

“If you don’t leave off that howling, George,” cried out Dunkington, who was lying on the sofa in the sitting room, next morning, “I shall go mad. For the last two hours I have heard nothing but that confounded—

“I love the gale that swells the sail.”

“What have I been doing, Tom?” asked Warren, who was unconscious of having chaunted to the extent mentioned.

“Doing?” echoed Dunkington. “Why, annoying your neighbours by letting your love evaporate in song. I have called to you half a dozen times, but you would not hear. What a noodle you must be—to go snivelling about a woman who never can be yours. Why don’t you ask somebody else to have you?”

“Ah, Tom!” said Warren, with a sigh, “you have not a single spark of sentiment in your soul.”

“Save us from sentiment!” exclaimed Dunkington, “if that howling is a specimen of it. Ever since eight o’clock—and it is now eleven—has that eternal tune been ringing in my ears—

“I love the gale that swells the sail.”

“Don’t be vexed, my dear Tom,” said Warren; “I am so fond of you, I do not think I can part with you. Wait another month, and I’ll apply for leave and go home with you.”

“You are joking,” said Dunkington.

“Upon my word I am in earnest,” Warren replied.

“Well do,” urged Dunkington—“urgent private affairs, go along—write at once.”

Warren applied, and, to his surprise, a year's leave was granted, and Dunkington and himself immediately engaged cabins in the steamer. Before he bade Robert Dale farewell Warren made him promise never to mention his (Warren's) name in any letters which he might write to his friends in England; nor to speak of him in India except as a mere acquaintance.

On the passage from Calcutta to Suez, George Warren was in reality, what Dunkington called him, a perfect nuisance. When he did not sing "Jenny Dale" aloud to himself—he whistled the air—and there was no escape—as his friend truly remarked.

In the middle of Dunkington's best stories, George would put on a sorrowful look—cease to listen—and begin

“ *Dear Jenny Dale—the rising gale
Strikes other hearts with fear;*”

and all the ridicule which Dunkington could bestow upon him and his song too—by burlesquing it—could not stop him. In vain did Dunkington go about the deck bawling to the same air—

“ *Dear Jenny Dale—when I'm in jail
I'll think of you, my dear,
So long as I—have tin to buy
A pewter pot of beer—*

Dear Jenny—*Jenny Dale!* Dear Jenny,—Jenny,—Jen—ny Dale!”

When they got to Cairo, Dunkington declared that if Warren did not drop "Jenny Dale" they must part company, for he could stand it no longer. Warren promised that he would cease; but the promise was scarcely made before it was broken.

"George!" said Dunkington, seriously (and it was very seldom that he was serious), "I do not know what to make of you. You have not spoken a dozen words to me since we left Calcutta. Nothing but that horrible song, or a whistle, has escaped your lips. You must be mad, and to tell you the truth, I don't understand this sudden movement of yours homeward. I heard you declare the very last day we were

at Meerut that you would never leave India. What has come over you, George?"

"Dunkington!" replied Warren, with equal seriousness. "I believe I *am* mad on one point, and if I am again disappointed I shall go mad on all points."

"What do you mean, man?"

"My old love, my only love, is a widow, and I am going home to ask her to be mine."

"Well, I thought it was something of that sort. Every man is the best judge of his own feelings; but, upon my word, George, I think you are a great fool for your pains."

"That song has got into my head, and when I am singing it, I feel happy."

"I wish it made *me* happy," said Dunkington, and he whistled a bar of it himself; and strange to say from that hour the air was never out of his head; he whistled it, at intervals, ever after; and for all the writer knows he is whistling it at this very moment.

The travellers were advised at Marseilles to go to London viâ Paris, and they did so, and arrived at that capital one beautiful evening in the month of July. They "put up" at Meurice's, and although many years had elapsed since Warren had been inside those walls, he was instantly recognised by several of the establishment, as one of the three gentlemen who were so very like to each other.

Dunkington was so pleased with Paris he stayed some days there; and Warren made the best of his way alone to London, travelling day and night.

CHAPTER XX.

MRS. PERCY thought less of George Warren since the death of her husband than ever she thought of him before. The principal portion of her time was occupied in writing to her relations and attending to the wants of the poor people around her. Her income was not very large, but it was more than sufficient; for Jenny lived very quietly, and seldom or never went away from her home. The little cottage was a picture of comfort and neatness; but to her it always appeared desolate and gloomy.

One day Mrs. Percy felt in very low spirits, and she made up her mind to spend the day with Mrs. Shandus; who was always happy to see her and cheer her when she was in a desponding humour.

“Oh! Jenny,” cried Mrs. Shandus, after they had chatted for an hour, “I quite forgot to tell you. The other day Mr. Shandus attended a sale of the effects of the late Mr. Castle—to purchase some rare books—and there he saw the picture of ‘The Three Calendars.’ It was put up and Mr. Shandus made a bid for it. There were very few persons present, and he got it for fifty-seven pounds. It has just reached this. I will order the case to be unpacked. If you behave well I am sure Mr. Shandus will make you a present of it. He wrote to me to say that he would.”

“How very kind of Mr. Shandus!” she replied. “But I would rather not see it just now;” and the mind was carried back to the time when she first saw the picture—to the only time that she saw it—to the day when she was betrayed to give away her hand, when her heart was another’s. The very mention of the picture made her sorrowful, and revived scenes which were then fading in the memory. One thought

hurried her on to another, and Jenny shed tears. Mrs. Shandus was sorely vexed that she had caused them, and attempted to jest with Mrs. Percy about Sir Jasper, but this increased rather than diminished her sorrow.

In the evening Mrs. Percy returned to her home more dejected, even, than when she had left it. She was met in the avenue by the maid, who said a gentleman had called, and was within doors. She made some inquiries; but she could glean nothing beyond this—that it was not Sir Jasper. The gardener was leading a horse, which had evidently been ridden hard, up and down the walk in front of the house. Mrs. Percy wondered—hoped—and feared—in the same instant. She reined in her pony—jumped off—hurried round to the back door, and made her way up stairs through the kitchen.

“Who can it be?” she asked herself—“The new curate?” she guessed—and making up her mind that it would be no one else, she came down stairs as she was then apparelled—in her riding habit.

When Mrs. Percy saw George Warren, and heard his voice, she fainted away, and she would have fallen, had he not sprung forward and caught her in his arms. She could not conceal her intense joy at again beholding one whom she had so devotedly loved—one whom she could now love as fondly as ever. It was in that little room that her love for him was created, and there had they so often talked over the happiness that was in store for them.

“Jenny, dearest Jenny,” he cried, “may I hope that you will now be mine?”

She gave him her hand, and essayed to say “yes,” but her feelings prevented her from speaking even that little word.

The evening was closing in and they walked out upon the lawn, and into the little front garden where he had first breathed love to her, and where their vows were plighted. Jenny looked around her and fancied it was in a dream that she saw George Warren on that spot: she could hardly believe that, in reality, the idol of her soul looked upon her so tenderly and spoke such kind words to her. Her beauty had somewhat waned; but in his eyes she was ten thousand times

more beautiful than ever. They returned to the cottage and talked of interesting matters till the night was far advanced, and then Warren bade her good-night and rode back to Leamington. It seemed but as yesterday that he had travelled the road—when the cottage was crowded with inmates, and Jenny one of the number. She was then a young light-hearted girl of eighteen years of age, and engaged to be his wife. She was now in her twenty-eighth year—a widow—and the only occupant of that peaceful abode. A fear came over Warren that something might yet intervene and rob him of the joy of being her husband—and a similar fear possessed Mrs. Percy at the same moment, and caused her to lie awake till the morning dawned. She then fell asleep, and dreamed that she had never been married, and that she had an appointment with her first love at daylight. The noise of a horse's hoofs awakened her—and she was not certain for some minutes whether the past was not a freak of the imagination, and whether she was not still Jenny Dale. So doubtful was she that she listened to hear the matutinal noise of her boisterous brothers, and the shrill whistle of her old father for his pet dogs. Her eye caught sight of a black dress trimmed with crape, and dispelled the doubt. She looked out of the window and saw Warren pacing the walks of the garden and plucking flowers, as of old, and she knew that he was plucking them for her. She hastened to meet him in the garden, and warmly did she greet him. They roamed about the grounds together, and if ever happiness was depicted on the faces of mortals it was depicted on theirs. After breakfast they rode over to the ruins, and there reverted to the time when they last met there. The day was half over, and Mrs. Percy proposed that they should call on Mrs. Shandus on the way home. But Warren looked as though he would rather that they did not; and she revoked the proposal at once.

As yet Warren had never told her of his meeting with her brother in India. When he was in the middle of the story relating to Robert, a carriage was driven up to the door.

Mrs. Percy blushed, and ran out to meet Mrs. Shandus and prepare her for an interview with George Warren, whose

name had long since ceased to be spoken by Mrs. Shandus's lips.

Mrs. Shandus saw plainly from Mrs. Percy's manner that she was delighted to see her lover again, and she gleaned from the fact of his return that the affection which he had evinced for "Jenny Dale" was not insincere, or affected by time and distance. At first Mrs. Shandus made an excuse for not alighting, but being fearful that the sensitive Mrs. Percy would think her refusal ungracious, she changed her mind—went within—and had Mr. Warren a second time introduced to her. He was greatly changed in every way since she had last seen him. Although he was not aged, that youthful appearance which he wore had departed entirely. His manners, too, were so different to those which he put on in Mrs. Grove's presence (they were so much more staid and simple), that Mrs. Shandus was tempted to overcome all her prejudices to like Warren. She knew that her influence over Mrs. Percy was great enough to deter her from marrying again; but far from feeling any wish to exert herself in this, it struck her she would rather encourage their union; and in order to make Warren some amends for the past, she invited him to the house, and begged he would be their guest as long as he remained in that part of the country. How that invitation pleased Mrs. Percy! and how thankfully did George Warren accept it!

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That evening Mr. Shandus came back to his home. The session was over, and he had in anticipation some months of good shooting, and that delicious repose in the country which is so greatly enjoyed after a lengthened and tedious stay amidst London's smoke and bustle. His wife told him that on the morrow they would have for a guest Jenny Dale's first lover—Mr. Warren—who had returned from India to urge his suit again. Mr. Shandus paid a high compliment to Warren's constancy and perseverance, and said he should be very glad to see him.

"Do you know, dear, I have often pitied him," said Mr. Shandus, "since I heard Jane sing that song; and at one

time I was very uneasy when I heard that Percy, Knolle, and himself were all on good terms again. I know of several cases where the revival of old love has proved stronger than the obligations which women have engaged to observe, and my belief is that had any other man in the world but Percy married that woman ——”

“You are very much mistaken,” interrupted Mrs. Shandus. “I know her better than yourself, and I feel convinced that had she married the most unkind creature that ever was born, she would have acted with the same propriety.”

“She is a dear creature, I know,” said Mr. Shandus, “and to see her happy and contented will delight me beyond everything.”

CHAPTER XXI.

WARREN was in the public room of the Regent at Leamington, and about to go to bed on the night of the day which he met Mrs. Shandus at the cottage. A gentleman who was playing whist at one of the tables, ~~cut out, and~~ coming up to Warren, he observed, "I think we knew each other very well in former days."

Warren replied, "I shall be most happy to renew our acquaintance; but I have a very bad memory, and trust you will pardon my not remembering you."

"We were at Downing College together in 18—." (He named a year.)

"I was never at Downing, nor at either of the Universities."

"I have the honour of addressing Dr. Knolle."

Warren smiled and said "No! Doctor Knolle is an old friend of mine, and I believe he was at Downing; but we are not related even."

"I beg your pardon," returned the other. "I felt sure that I was right, and that we were fellow-pupils."

"I have not seen Knolle for years."

"He was making an enormous income, and in a very few years he would have been at the top of the tree, but for that melancholy accident which happened him. He would never have retired of his own accord!"

"Melancholy accident? What was that? I am very sorry to ——"

"*He married!*"

Warren was amused at matrimony being defined as "a melancholy accident." In reply he remarked, that, from

hat he recollected of the Doctor, he thought the married state would vastly improve him.

“ It might have done, but he fell amongst a bad lot, and made a bad pick.”

“ Whom did he marry ? ” asked Warren.

“ One of those Dale girls—a very bad lot. Handsome, it not over correct.”

“ I have always understood that they were quite the contrary.”

“ You were misled, then. I know them well. There was the eldest girl, Mary ; she married Knolle, and by her extravagance and one thing or the other, she embarrassed him woefully and disgusted him at last, which is the sole reason for his throwing his profession up.”

“ I am very sorry to hear that,” said Warren.

“ Then there’s the second—Charlotte. A very queer girl. He tried hard to catch two or three people, but it was no go. He was known, and it would not do.”

“ Charlotte ? ”

“ Yes ; and then there’s the young one that was—femina, or whatever her name is. She married Percy, whom she bullied so, that he drank himself to death, which was just what she wanted, that she might catch my friend, Sir Jasper Gatesby ; but the old fox is too knowing for that sort of thing.”

“ According to your account, they are, certainly, not a very amiable family, and I mourn with you over the fate of our friend Knolle. Good night ! ” And Warren went up stairs, perfectly satisfied that when he supposed it was a peculiarity of Indian life to destroy a woman’s reputation without cause, he had made a great mistake ; and as he looked in the glass, and thought of his dear Jenny, he could not help quoting :—“ Be thou chaste as ice, pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.”

How delighted was Warren when the morning came. He galloped to the cottage as hard as the hack could lay his legs to the ground ; and what was his disappointment to hear that Jenny had gone to stay with Mrs. Shandus ! At that hour he could hardly proceed thither ; and he strolled down to ‘ the meadow,’ and found that it had been sown with corn ;

and while he looked around he ruminated on the great changes that a few years make in a family. He then entered the cottage and admired the picture which he had seen in Bentinck-street, until his anxiety to see the original made him so restless he knew not what to do with himself. He thought it unkind that she should go away when she knew he would be there early in the morning; but he made himself content with imagining that she did not do so without some good reason. He saw her thimble on a work-table, and he put it on his little finger, and played with it, and he kissed her Berlin wools that were in her work-basket, for he was quite sure that her dear little hand had touched them often.

Mr. Shandus was much pleased with George Warren; and seemingly surprised at his extraordinary insight into human nature. In natural ability he did not think him at all inferior to Knolle or Percy; although his pursuits had been such as to give his capabilities no trial.

Mrs. Shandus was sorry that she had ever stood in his way, and broken off his engagement; but the thought that "all would be well that ended well" pacified every qualm of conscience.

Mrs. Percy went back to the cottage, and there remained during Warren's stay with the Shanduses. She was far from happy, for she was beset with fears. She knew not how Knolle would receive the news, and trembled lest her sister should upbraid her for this second alliance. Warren was perfectly happy in Jenny's presence; but all kinds of childish superstitions stole upon him in her absence; so weak are even the strongest of minds when they are under the influence of love.

A strange cat came into his room, and mewed. This in his part of the country was a sign of death, and as such he now regarded it; and he dreamt that he lost one of his teeth. This also was a bad sign, and he could not, for the life of him, divest himself of the suspicion that something horrible was impending.

Knolle's letter to George Warren comforted him exceedingly. It was full of the Doctor's own kindness of heart, and a counterpart of the epistle he had written to Jennette, congratulating her on the happiness which was in store for *her*.

The three sisters were again under the same roof which sheltered them in childhood.

The day was fixed for Warren's wedding with Jennette Percy. The morning came and they were ready to go to the church. Jennette shed tears and lingered in the little drawing-room. Mrs. Knolle reminded her that it was getting late, and that the Doctor and Mr. Warren were waiting.

Jenny looked at the wedding-ring which Percy had placed upon her finger. She was about to take it off, but her heart failed her. It had never been removed since the moment it was thereon placed by her late husband, and now when she felt that it was to be withdrawn, she imagined that the act would be one of ingratitude towards a being who had never shown aught but kindness to herself, and to all who were belonging unto her.

"Ask him, Mary," she cried, "ask him to let the ring remain; I cannot, I will not remove it."

Mrs. Knolle went into the little verandah, where Warren and her husband were talking together, and communicated her sister's wishes. Warren smiled and returned with her to the room, where Mrs. Percy remained, still weeping, and looking at the ring.

"Dearest Jenny!" he exclaimed, "do not weep to-day. I would rather, dearest, that Percy's token should remain upon your hand. Your regard for him does not lessen my love for you. Come, dearest, brighten up, and let us delay no longer."

She leant upon the arm he offered her, and was led to the carriage. When they arrived at the church, they were met by Mr. and Mrs. Shandus. The ceremony was performed, and Jennette Percy became the wife of George Warren!

How happy were they both, when they came out of the church and the sun shed its rays upon them as man and wife!

Some minutes elapsed before Warren could speak to her—nor could he return thanks for any of the good wishes

which were so plentifully expressed by all who were present. As they drove to the house of Mr. Shandus, where a breakfast was prepared, Warren could not forbear quoting to his wife, while he looked affectionately into her still beautiful face, the lines she had often heard him sing :

To hold one sacred flame
Through life unchang'd—unmoved—
To love in wintry age the same
As in our youth we loved—

To feel that we adore
With such refined excess,
That though the heart would burst with more,
It cannot do with less—

Oh! this is love—a fervent love,
Such as saints might feel above.

CHAPTER XXII.

WARREN and his wife went down to Cornwall—where they led a devoted life to each other, and where a thousand times they both rejoiced that they could look back upon the dark past with more of satisfaction than regret. The delay of their union—now that it had taken place—made it appear the sweeter to them.

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On the expiration of his leave Warren retired from the army—at the request of his wife, whose wishes were as law to him. They lived quietly, and were beloved by every soul, rich and poor, in the county.



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